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# **LIGUORIAN**

***We Cannot Live without  
the Mass***

***How to Make a Good  
Confession***

***Why Not Adopt?***

***Boy-friend without Faith***



***YOU SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH,***

***AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE.***

**MAY, 1956**



# THE Liguorian

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and to All That  
Brings Happiness to  
Human Beings*

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THE LIGUORIAN IS INDEXED  
IN THE CATHOLIC PERIODICAL INDEX



John N. McCormick, C.S.S.R.

John A. Treinen, C.S.S.R.

# WE CANNOT LIVE WITHOUT THE MASS

Just as there can be  
no religion without sacrifice,  
so there can be no  
Christian life without the Mass.

SINCE the sixteenth century something sad, even disastrous has been happening to the idea of prayer. In our day we see the meaning of prayer gradually falling apart, so that there is hardly one solid piece left of it.

This breakdown in the idea of prayer had its origin in Protestantism with its insistence on individual freedom, private interpretation of Scripture, private determination of the law of God. Such false notions lead naturally to a false idea of prayer.

This decline shows itself in the divorce of prayer from the very elements which make it genuine and effective. Unfortunately this Protestant mentality has also infected the thought of many Catholics. We speak with Protestants on the street, on the train and at home; we find their re-

ligious views insinuated in writings not specifically religious. Contact here means contagion. The result is that our own ideas are colored by these indirect influences.

This cutting away of the substantial elements of prayer developed in three stages.

## PRAYER WITHOUT SACRIFICE

1. Prayer was divorced from the idea of sacrifice. With the outlawing of the Mass and the smashing of Catholic altars, the so-called Reformation reduced prayer to mere lip-service without act or evidence to back it up.

To those cut off from the body of the true Church by the reformers, a church was an organ and a choir, a pulpit and a book. If there was an altar, it was not for sacrifice but only for holding a book. Songs of love for God died with the silencing of the organ. Protestations of adoration cost nothing but the breath spent in sounding them. Sighs of sorrow for sin demanded no proof of sincerity. Prayer was reduced to hollow words.

## PRAYER WITHOUT FELLOWSHIP

2. Then prayer was divorced from our fellowship with other men. It became a solitary, lonely thing. Individual freedom, personal rights, extreme nationalism made men lose sight of their oneness, the unity of the whole human race. So far had men forgotten the divine unity of the human race that a phrase, *One World*, coined by a politician, hit them with the force of an atomic explosion. "A new idea," they cried, as if Christ had never prayed, "That they all may be one!" Far beyond Christ's meaning they interpreted the words, "When you pray, go into your room and close the door and pray in private to your Father," so that prayer was divorced from the prayer of other men and made alone with God.

All else we do in society with others: work, play, study, argue and debate, but not pray. Men lost the deep sense of the unity of the human race, because they lost the true idea of the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ; they had torn it limb from limb. The social life of all men in Christ was forgotten. So men prayed alone, divorced from their fellow-men.

## PRAYER WITHOUT GOD

3. And now prayer is divorced even from God. The collapse is complete.

Prayer used to be thought of as a seeking after God. Now in prayer men seek to satisfy a vague emotional need, to fill an undefinable senti-

mental void in their hearts, to find relaxation for their tired and taut nerves, to purchase a sense of power by contact with some unknown superhuman force, no matter if that force is Buddha, or Nirvana, or a cosmic radiation, or the fifth dimension.

This is not a false accusation; evidence for its truth abounds. Recently we heard of a professor in a medical school for whom the church represents one of man's intuitive approaches to truth. For him, to leave prayer uncultivated is to miss one of the greatest sources of knowledge. This is true no matter how ineffective the church may be, how poor the preaching, for there is a beauty in any church service and food for thought in every sermon. The hurry of existence leaves little enough time for that quiet contemplation from which creative ideas arise. Going to church is one of the vital necessities.

But where does this professor's idea of prayer make contact with God?

## THE CATHOLIC VIEW

In contrast to these motives for going to church, for praying, we have this statement of a Catholic woman: "To keep house means to exercise day in and day out a woman's peculiar talent for doing the same utterly unimportant things over and over again. I am not content with this. I want to say a word that will pierce the heavens and do a deed that will shake the earth. At church a deed is done and I help do it; there a word



is said and I help say it. My word reaches the heart of God and my deed redeems the world. Consequently I go to church not to listen or to get, but to give and to do. Spiritual satisfaction? Say rather spiritual effectiveness. Comfort for the soul? Say rather use of the soul."

This good Catholic lady was thinking of the Mass. She was not infected with any Protestant mentality.

\* \* \*

If you should wonder why we are going back to renew our acquaintance with the Mass, the answer is this: because too few Catholics think as this alive and alert Catholic lady whom we quoted. If all Catholics would think as she did, there would be no need of learning again about the Mass.

Sadly, the majority of Catholics must be convinced that there is no prayer without sacrifice; that there is no truly effective prayer separated from the family life of Christ and His members, that every prayer must look up to God first in adoration and thanksgiving and love, as well as look upon ourselves.

Here is the Catholic doctrine about the Mass.

*The Mass is prayer with sacrifice.*

*The Mass is prayer and sacrifice with the Church.*

*The Mass is the prayer and sacrifice of the Church with Christ to God.*

*The Mass, in a word, is Catholic life.*

This truth, that the Mass is Catholic life, was expressed seventeen

centuries ago. A group of Christians was dragged in chains to Carthage because they had dared in secret to celebrate the Mass, despite the prohibition under penalty of death. When the man who had offered his house for this secret divine service was asked by the pagan governor why he had done this, he answered quite simply: "These are my brothers. I could not keep them from it, because without the holy Mass we cannot live."

May God grant that all who read these thoughts on the Mass will be so enlightened and inspired that they too will say, "We cannot live without the Mass."

#### IT IS THE MASS THAT MATTERS

How well the enemies of Christ and His Church sense the importance of the Mass to Catholics! It is always the central fortress in the kingdom of God which they labor to batter down. The rulers of Rome drove the early Christians into the catacombs. The Protestant rebels against Christ and His Church, His Mystical Body, centered their attack upon the Mass. In Mexico, in Russia, in Red Spain of some years ago, the Mass was the first Catholic act to be outlawed. In pagan Nazi Germany seminaries were closed and seminarians driven into civil or military life under penalty of death. Today bishops and priests, for the flimsiest of reasons, are herded into concentration camps or thrown into prison in China and Yugoslavia—to die. And all this to kill the priesthood and so to kill the Mass.

Even they know too well that "It is the Mass that matters."

The true lovers and friends of Christ know that the Mass must go on, else the end of all is upon us. And the Mass does go on, in every nation of the globe.

Priests may die as did Father Pro and hundreds of others in Mexico, because they offer Mass in secret mountain hideaways and in broken farm houses; but the Mass is more important than their lives. Priests in disguise find their way into Red Russia with the blessing of the Holy Father upon their martyrdom, while the rest of the world trembles at the ruthlessness of the Red dictators and fears to defy their inhuman tyranny—and Russia still has its Masses. It is almost a monotonous repetition of history; monotonous but heroic.

And why this heroic, this apparently fanatical devotion to the Mass? Why? Because it is a command of the Master; the last order He gave before He went out into the dark night to die for us. Never shall we forget, never shall we neglect that last order from the Master.

Why did Christ lay such stress and emphasis on the continuation of the Mass? Because the Mass is the soul, the center of the divine religion that He has left us; because without the Mass there can be no Christianity, as without sacrifice there can be no religion.

#### TRUE RELIGION DEMANDS A SACRIFICE

It is a matter of history that there has never existed a religion which

sprang true from the human heart which did not have its sacrifice. And here let us dispose of an objection at once. Someone may say: "Protestantism never had nor has a sacrifice."

With all respect to sincere Protestants we answer: Protestantism as a religion is a negation, as its name implies. It is a protest. Against what? Against the will of Christ; against the Mystical Body of Christ; against the truth and teaching of Christ. It is a fit of anger and resentment and rebellion against the social order God has set up in the world. But it is by no means a natural expression of man's religious life, of man's relation to God. That is why Protestantism is a dying religion. It arose from resentment, quarrels and greed, not from man's natural desire to acknowledge the rights of God and the duties of man.

Every natural religion springing clean from man's human impulses and convictions is built around a sacrifice. Why is this so? When men had gathered their harvests of grain from the fields, when men had watched their cattle grow from weak and tottering calves into fully developed animals ready for the slaughter, they instinctively thought of the God Who made all these things possible.

In their desire to express their gratitude, in their sense of dependence upon their Creator, in their conviction of what would become of them if His providence failed them, they took the finest grain from their fields and the choice head from the herds and offered them to Him as a symbol of their belief that all they

were and all they had belonged to Him. Their reason went even further.

Thus in their ancient records you can read of the Aztec Indians of Mexico adorning the fairest virgin of their tribe and hurling her into a burning volcano or furnace. You can read of the North American Indians gathered on the banks of the Niagara River, hands and voices raised in prayer, while the most beautiful daughter of the tribe, helpless to disengage herself from her floating prison, drifts over the ridge of the falls in a canoe to sudden death as a sacrifice to the lord of life and death.

We do not endeavor to justify the slaughter of innocents; we are not saying that the fifth commandment of God was abrogated. But this we do say: the principle of these primitives is correct. The basic thought

**COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS —  
BUT DAILY**

When I walk into church I begin to think of all the bedridden who are unable to do the same . . . when I kneel, I glance with new appreciation at the woman before me who is too old to kneel; . . . when I clasp my hands to pray, I begin to envision an old acquaintance who has no hands; . . . as I gaze at the elevated Host during Mass, I begin to remember those who are blind and unable to see such a sight; . . . when Jesus rests upon my tongue at Communion, that tongue that enables me to speak, I realize that there are many who do not enjoy its use; and when the choir responds *Deo gratias* at the end of Mass, it echoes in my heart, for I too, feel like singing.

*Rally*

common to the idea of sacrifice is solid and reasonable.

In his effort to acknowledge God as his Creator and himself as a creature, the barbarian offered to Him the very life that God had loaned him, as the most precious thing in his possession. The principle is correct, though the application of the principle is false and erroneous. Nevertheless in the offering of the most precious thing he owned, the barbarian said with a deep sincerity that makes modern religionists seem hypocritical: "Lord, God, we acknowledge Thy sovereignty and adore Thee. We are grateful to Thee and thank Thee. We hope for Thy continued mercy. We repent of our misuse of Thy gifts and implore Thy pardon. See our sincerity in the gift we offer Thee."

**AS OLD AS THE HUMAN RACE**

Sacrifice is the highest form of religious worship, the outward public expression of man's entire dependence upon God. And because man's belief in a Supreme Being is natural, because it is natural for man to give outward expression to his inward sentiment and convictions, the offering of sacrifice is as old as the human race.

On the first pages of human history we find Cain and Abel offering sacrifice to God; one offered the fruits of the field, the other sacrificed the firstlings of the flock.

Even among pagans you will find this truth carried out. Plutarch, the Greek historian, writes: "You may find cities without walls, without literature, without a ruler; but you will

never find a city without a deity, without a sacrifice and without prayer."

#### GOD COMMANDS IT

What reason urges, God commanded. When men began to wander hopelessly from religious truth, God Himself intervened. He selected the Chosen People to guard His truth; He codified the law of human nature on Mount Sinai and unmistakably manifested His will.

Among these very first prescriptions of His will was the command to offer sacrifice. By God's order, a family, that of Aaron, was singled out by Moses as the priestly family with only one work in life, that of prayer and sacrifice.

Minutely and in most precise detail did God instruct the Jews in this essential act of their religion. Individually, as well as socially, the principal acts of religion were prayer and sacrifice — not preaching. Some sacrifices were destined to the adoration and honor of God; others to thank Him; still others to plead for His graces and blessings; others, finally, were sacrifices for sin.

But though their sacrifices embraced almost all their possessions in one form or another, yet they all clustered around one which was the outstanding sacrifice of the Old Law — that of the Paschal Lamb. It was both a memory and a prophecy; a memory of the deliverance of the Jews from the captivity in Egypt, and a prophecy of the delivery of the whole world from the captivity of sin under the justice of God by the redemptive sacrifice of the True Paschal Lamb, Christ on Calvary.

#### PAY-OFF

"We are often amazed and happily surprised at the ready response of our Negro kindergarten class to spiritual truths," writes Sister Florence, S.Sp.S., in *The Master's Work*.

Sister was trying to impress upon the little ones God's great abhorrence of sin, and made His words to the lost soul very realistic: "Go, far, far away from Me. I don't ever want to see you again."

Then she asked one of the children: "Now what do you think God will say to the good people on the last day?"

The child's answer came quickly: "He'll smile at them and say, 'You-all been right smart.'"

#### THE PERFECT SACRIFICE

Yet what adequate honor and glory can grain and animals render to God? How can they be acceptable, save only in consideration of the spirit of adoration and worship and love that prompts men to offer them? Still, in themselves they are not even perfectly symbolic of adoration and gratitude; they offer no true satisfaction for sin. In the words of St. Paul: "It is impossible that sin should be taken away with the blood of oxen and goats."

There was an imperative need for an offering, a sacrifice that could really and in justice offer to God the adoration, the thanks and above all the reparation for sins that He deserved. That, of course, meant an infinite gift. Even human life was insufficient, because it involved no infinite honor or reparation.

That is why the Word was made flesh, uniting Himself to us in order to offer the only worthy sacrifice to His Father. He did this not merely as our representative, but as a part of us, as our head. He paid the price of our sins, not as a friend will pay the fine imposed upon his friend in court, but as a hand will pay the fine for the whole body. He suffered, not as a friend suffers in sympathy, but as our head suffers the pain of a headache for the overindulgence of the rest of the body.

On Calvary we have the only sacrifice that can fulfill completely the office of sacrifice. The *altar of sacrifice* is the cross, raised on an elevation, midway between God and us. Voluntarily Christ mounts this altar. He is the *Victim* which is offered. Forever finished are the incomplete victims — sheep, scapegoats, lambs — and instead, His beautiful, holy, sinless body is broken and presented to His Father in our name. He, too, is the *priest* who offers. Of His own free will He makes this sacrifice. He does not bend His neck to a sword or hang limp from a rope. He stands erect, with head high against the altar, retaining full use of His powers to the very end, commanding the situation, speaking now to God and now to man. He could have escaped as He did before, by miraculous flight through dense crowds, by the majesty of His divinity in the garden. But no! This is the hour of sacrifice for which He has waited so long. He will not retreat.

On the road down to Jerusalem from Bethany, knowing that they

were waiting for Him, He had said: "I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptised and how am I straitened, torn apart with eagerness, until it be accomplished." Calmly, as a priest at the altar, He now hangs on the cross and offers Himself in throes of love to His Father — freely, joyously.

Thus, by the sacrifice of the cross, the greatest gift was offered to God: the life and death of Christ, the God-Man. You and I, guilty of sin, die in the person of Christ. But He alone is crucified, the rest of us are free. God's love for us is proved, and the dawn of hope breaks once more upon the race of men. Life is worth living again; God is in our midst again, though dead on the cross.

Men are born into the world to live. With Christ it was just the reverse: He was born into the world to die. Death was not the collapse but the crown of His life and work, for He came to give His life for a redemption for many. When He had died, He had just begun.

Since His death was the supreme moment for which He had lived, He wanted to have it remembered before all others. He did not ask that men should write down His words in a Scripture. He did not ask that His kindness to the poor, the lame and the blind should be recorded in history. But He did ask that men would remember His death. For God's death for man was something too beautiful, too holy ever to be forgotten. In order that its memory might not be any haphazard narrative on the part of men, Christ Himself instituted the

precise way it should be recalled. Man has instituted memorial days to recall the death and sacrifice of soldiers, but Christ instituted His own memorial to recall His death on the cross. This He did at the Last Supper. After He had said, "This is my body which shall be delivered for you. This is my blood of the New Testa-

ment which shall be shed for many unto the remission of sins," He added, "Do this for a commemoration of Me."

That commemoration, that remembrance of His death is the Mass.

(This is the first of a series of articles on the Mass by Father McCormick and Father Treinen.)

## POINTS OF FRICTION

### Temperament

Louis G. Miller, C.S.S.R.

Avoiding friction and getting along well with people requires much good will and solid virtue. But besides having good will, our native intelligence also should be brought to bear on the problem. Without much study, our mind can readily grasp the fact that in any given group of people, there is a wide variation in likes and dislikes and attitudes toward life.

Another way of saying this is that everyone differs in temperament. Temperament is the combination of qualities in you that makes you the kind of person you are by nature. Your temperament might be termed the raw material out of which it is your duty to forge a strong character.

According to psychologists, there are four basic temperaments, which can be mentioned only briefly here.

The choleric is the temperament of action, of leadership, of determination. At its best it inspires confidence; at its worst it is overbearing.

The sanguinic temperament is the pleasant, friendly, social-minded type; without great depth, yet capable of warm affection.

The melancholic temperament is that of the dreamer; the man of thought rather than action, especially appreciative of beauty in the arts.

The phlegmatic is the slow and plodding temperament, without much imagination, yet capable of great and persevering devotion to a cause.

It is important to observe that in each of the four temperaments there are both good and bad points. It is of no use to wish that you were a different kind of person than you are. It is your task to strive to overcome the bad tendencies of your particular temperament, and to "accentuate the positive," to bring out the good qualities of which each temperament is capable.

For avoiding friction, knowledge of temperamental differences can be very useful. If by nature you are sanguinic, be on your guard against giving in to annoyance at the slowness of the phlegmatic. If you are a choleric person, a man of action, you must, whether you like it or not, allow room in the world for the emotionalism and indecisiveness of the melancholic.

Perfect charity may never be reached, but at least, if new beginnings are constantly made, friction will be cut to a minimum, and it will be a much happier world in which to live.



# How to Make a Good Confession

DONALD F. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

These are the simple rules to be followed  
in accepting one of the greatest gifts  
God ever offered to man — His  
everlasting forgiveness of sin through  
the sacrament of penance.

**T**HERE are two things that may be called the greatest folly of which Catholics can be guilty. The one is to neglect confession for a long period of time when in the state of mortal sin. The other is to compound the guilt of one's sins by making a bad confession.

Not a few Catholics fall into either of these dire mistakes simply because they do not reflect, in their sad state of sin, on the goodness of Christ in providing them with a means of forgiveness for their sins, on the ease with which a good confession can be made, and on the glorious feeling of liberation and peace that always follows on a good confession.

The purpose of these lines is to stimulate such reflexion primarily in those who need a good confession for their soul's salvation. At the same time this outline of what is required for a good confession should destroy some of the groundless or scrupulous fears that good people often have about their confessions.

The sacrament of penance was designed by Christ not only for those in mortal sin, who must use it to obtain their forgiveness from God. It was also intended as a source of special grace to overcome sin on the part of those who have not fallen into mortal sin. That is why confession should be used regularly and often even by those striving after perfection, and it should hold no terrors for them. Chiefly, however, this is an outline of how to make a good confession when it is needed because of one or more mortal sins.

All that enters into the making of a good confession may be summed up under five headings or qualities, each of which can be easily explained and easily understood. A good confession is one that is made 1) with faith, 2) with sincerity, 3) with completeness, 4) with sorrow, 5) with penance.



## 1. WITH FAITH

Anyone who has fallen into serious sin should immediately begin to stir up his faith in two great truths that Christ revealed to all mankind.

The first is the truth that He wants to forgive the sinner, no matter how black or how numerous are his sins. Christ made that clear in a hundred ways. He did so by stating it as the very purpose of His coming into the world: "I am come to save that which was lost." "I will not the death of the sinner but that he be converted and live." He did so by forgiving the palsied man, the Magdalen, the adulterous woman, the thief on the cross. He did so by praying for sinners while He was being nailed to the cross.

The second is the truth that He wants sinners to seek forgiveness in a specific way, through a special sacrament that He instituted for this purpose. It is strange that anyone can read the clear passage in the Bible in which Christ placed His divine power of forgiveness in the hands of His apostles, and yet deny that confession is necessary for the forgiveness of his sins. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," Christ said in John, 20:22-23, "whose sins you shall forgive they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain they are retained." The face value of these words contains the mandate to sinners that they bring their sins, that is, confess their sins, to one of the apostles or one of their successors in order to have them forgiven by God.

**F**AITH in this mandate quickly brings to the sinner comforting realizations about the value of confession. A good confession to a priest will bring him *certainly* of his forgiveness, as externalized in the absolution uttered by the priest. He will no longer have to wonder or worry or doubt about his forgiveness, as he surely would if confession were merely an internal affair of the heart. It will bring him a sense of relief and peace, just as modern psychiatry has found that even mental conflicts can be resolved through the medium of self-revelation to another.

And all this is won at so small a price. The sinner enters the darkened confessional. He need not know the priest and the priest need not know him. He need not tell his name. He need only whisper the name of his sins, and immediately the priest is bound by secrecy unto death, and bound also, if the penitent shows sincerity and sorrow, to give the absolution that removes the guilt of the sin forever.

How can any sinner hesitate or delay to enter a confessional, who knows and reflects on these truths concerning this great sacrament?

## 2. WITH SINCERITY

Sincerity in making a confession is the same as frankness, truthfulness, simplicity. It is the opposite of deliberate deceitfulness, hypocrisy or lying. It means that the sinner tells his sins as he knows that they are known to God. Sincerity flows from humility, without which no good confession can ever be made.

It is not a very difficult thing to deceive a priest while making a confession. One can simply use words that do not convey the nature of the sins that were committed. For example, one can say "I had a few bad thoughts," when actually one was guilty of bad actions either alone or with someone else. It is possible to think up words for any mortal sin that will make the priest think that only a venial sin has been committed.

**A**T THE same time sincerity demands that there be no deliberate exaggeration of one's sins. Sometimes, for example, penitents confess that they missed Mass on Sunday, saying nothing about the fact that they were sick in bed and unable to go to Mass. They are thus guilty of an exaggeration, because they committed no sin by missing Mass on account of illness, or for some other grave reason.

The price of deliberately misrepresenting a mortal sin in confession, so that the confessor will think it venial or no sin at all, is the making of a bad or sacrilegious confession. This adds a new and greater sin to all that were on the conscience before, and makes any reception of Holy Communion a sacrilege as well.

If one is truly humble, he says to himself before confession: "I know what sins I committed. God knows what sins I committed. God commands me to tell what I know and what He knows to the priest. I will do so without fear and without deceit."

### 3. WITH COMPLETENESS

There are two simple principles that explain the kind of completeness that every good confession must have. They are:

1) One is bound to tell all one's mortal sins, with the number of times they have been committed, with any important circumstances that change or compound the guilt incurred.

2) One is not bound to tell all one's venial sins in confession.

The important point to be remembered is that all known mortal sins must be told under pain of making a bad confession.

**I**T IS because of this requirement that a serious examination of conscience must be made before confession. This means that sufficient time must be given to looking back over the period that has elapsed since one's last confession to bring to mind all the mortal sins committed during that time. This is where the value of frequent confession becomes especially clear. One who goes to confession often will need only a brief examination of conscience before each confession for two reasons: first, because it is easy to recall whether he has seriously offended God in so short a time as one or two weeks; second, because frequent confession is a sign of a strong desire not to offend God, and any offence that has occurred will remain sharply in the memory until it is confessed.

For one who has been away from confession for some months or even years, considerable time should be

given to the examination of conscience before confession. In this the sinner will concentrate on two things: How many kinds of mortal sin did I commit? How many times did I commit each one? He does so in preparation for giving the priest as exact a record as possible of his serious sins.

Thus, in regard to the kind of mortal sins, he states the facts simply and clearly. He need not give any graphic description of his sins, nor tell the names of others who were involved. He need only reveal the kind of sin it was. "I missed Mass on Sunday without a good reason." "I stole something worth about twenty dollars." In regard to impurity, he remembers that it is not enough to say, "I was impure," or, "I broke the sixth commandment." He must clarify as to whether this was in thought or desire or word or action. If it was in action, he must state whether it was alone or with others: if it was with others, he must state whether he is a married person or a single person, and whether it was with a married person or a single person, with his own wife, or with a relative, and so on. These are cases in which circumstances are important because they designate the nature of the sin and must be told.

In regard to the number of times each mortal sin was committed, vague or indefinite terms must not be used. He must not say, "I missed Mass without a reason quite often, or several times." He says, "I missed Mass on Sunday, as nearly as I can

remember, *five* times." In regard to habitual sins, he may state the *average* number of times they were committed, for example, by saying, "I deliberately gave in to bad thoughts on an average of twice a week in the six months since my last confession."

It will happen to some who are making a confession that has to cover many months or many years, that even after a serious examination of conscience they will become nervous and flustered in the confessional and unable to recall what they thought they were all prepared to tell. In this event, they should not hesitate to say to the priest: "I'm all mixed up. Please help me." Any confessor will then proceed to ask sufficient questions to bring out all the important matters to be confessed, and the penitent will make a good confession.

**H**ERE again the point of greatest importance is that deliberately to fail to reveal a known mortal sin, or not to tell the number of times it was committed, would make one's confession bad. For example, it is well known from the conversations of many Catholic married people that they go to confession regularly but do not confess their sins of contraception. These people are making bad confessions, committing sacrileges every time they receive Communion and living in a constant state of mortal sin.

How does a person set about making a good confession who has made a bad one, say ten years ago, and made frequent confessions since that time without disclosing the facts about the bad one? The longer such

persons wait, the harder the devil makes their task seem. They should take courage from this explanation of just what they have to do.

Three things they must do: 1) Tell the priest about the bad confession of ten years back. ("I made a bad confession ten years ago because I deliberately concealed a sin of abortion, contraception. . . .") 2) Tell what sacraments they received during those ten years and how often. ("Since then, I went to confession on an average of once a month, received Communion about the same, and received the sacraments of confirmation and matrimony.") 3) Tell all the mortal sins committed during those ten years, even though many of them had been confessed since the bad confession. Again, if confusion or nervousness sets in, they need only ask the confessor for help and he will draw out the full story with kindness and completeness.

The second principle concerning the completeness of confession is that one is not bound to tell all one's venial sins. That is because such sins can be forgiven by other means than confession, such as acts of true sorrow, fervent love of God, self-denial, and the like. But confession is the best means of such forgiveness, and at least one's predominant venial sins should be confessed for the help that absolution will give for overcoming them.

Here it should be mentioned that the sacrament of penance cannot be received unless some actual sins are

told to the priest. Thus if a person has not been guilty of any mortal sins since his last confession, he must tell the priest some venial sin, or at least some sin of his past life, before the priest is allowed to give the sacramental absolution and before he can receive it validly.

#### 4. WITH SORROW

Equally important with the proper confession of one's sins, is the sorrow that must be present in the heart if one is to be forgiven by God. There are three elements that must enter into one's sorrow for sin if it is to be sufficient to win the forgiveness of God through confession.

*First*, it must obviously be *sincere*. It must be based on the realization that mortal sin is the only real evil in the world, the one thing to be most detested because it offends God, crucified Christ and makes a soul deserving of hell. There can be no question that an act of sorrow for sin rattled off in words but not meant in the heart is valueless. It is not necessary that sorrow for sin evoke tears from the eyes, though one who meditates on the sufferings of Christ caused by his sins may at times weep over them. But the important thing is that the sinner mean it when he says to God, "I'm sorry," and include in his sorrow every last one of his mortal sins.

*Second*, it must be based on *supernatural* motives. These are motives that reach into the next world. Pure-

ly natural, and therefore insufficient sorrow for sin, is that which might be based on the fact that the sinner brought down temporal misfortunes on himself by his sins: for example, he contracted a disease, or he lost his wife and broke up his home, or he lost his good name. The sorrow needed for a good confession must at least be based on the loss of heaven and the pains of hell deserved by reason of mortal sin. This is supernatural and sufficient for a good confession; but a far higher and more meritorious sorrow is that based on the offence one has given by sin to the all-good God.

*Third*, it must be *practical* in two senses of the word. Practical, in the sense that the sinner is now ready to suffer anything, even loss of life, rather than commit the same sin again. And practical in the second sense, that the sinner looks ahead into the future and decides on certain specific measures that he will take to avoid falling back into sin. Usually this is called having a firm purpose of amendment, and of using the means necessary for amendment.

Thus there can be no true or sufficient sorrow for sin if a person goes to confession with the intention, explicit or implicit, of continuing to commit the very sins he has to con-

fess. Married people, for example, cannot be forgiven when they confess sins of birth-prevention, unless they really intend and plan to give up those sins.

**F**OR the same reason, a person who has been falling into sin because he has been frequenting an unnecessary occasion of sin, cannot have true sorrow for his sins unless he seriously intends to give up the occasion of sin. Thus a married man who has been dating a single girl and falling into sin with her, cannot make a genuine act of sorrow for his sins unless he intends to give up not only the sins but the dates with the girl. The dates themselves are sinful for him, both because he is married, and because they are occasions of further sin.

A part of the practical element of true sorrow for sin is the determination to pray and receive the sacraments more often in the future. Every sin ever committed may be traced back to the sinner's failure to pray enough for the grace of God. When a person goes to confession with a long string of mortal sins to tell, he must recognize this truth, and make it a part of his act of sorrow that he will pray more, and receive the sacraments more often in the future. If he intends sincerely to do this, and then later on has the misfortune to fall back into mortal sin, he need not feel that his sorrow was insincere or his past confession bad.

But to confess all one's mortal sins without a sincere, determined, and practical intention to give every one

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### Temper, Temper!

When a man blames his mistakes on his temperamental disposition, what he really means is that he is ninety-eight per cent temper and two per cent mental.

of them up, would make a confession just as bad and just as sacrilegious as if one of the mortal sins were deliberately concealed. God cannot forgive a sinner, even through the powerful sacrament of penance, unless the sinner hates all his mortal sins and is determined to have done with them once and for all.

### 5. WITH PENANCE

It is the task of the priest who hears confessions to help the penitent tell all his sins, and then to ask a few questions to test the sincerity of his sorrow for them. He cannot actually read the heart; only God can do that. But when he has satisfied his mind that the person is sincere, he assigns a penance and imparts the absolution that takes away the sins of one truly repentant.

The penance is usually easy, and should be performed as soon as possible after the confession. But no sinner who has been forgiven one or many mortal sins should be content with the modest penance he is given by the priest. He may, indeed, ask for a greater penance if he wishes. But, above all, he should be willing to offer up all the little hurts and aches and pains and heartaches of his daily life, in further atonement for the deeds whereby he shared in the responsibility of nailing Christ to His cross.

**O**NE final word. Some people worry about confession because they think there are set forms of introduction that they are bound to use. This applies especially to

people who learned certain formulas for introducing their confession in a foreign language, and cannot, in later years, switch to a new language or a different form. Too many such are kept away from confession by fear of accidentals.

There is no indispensable form for beginning one's confession. People usually start by asking a blessing: "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," but even that is not necessary. A confession can start by a person's saying "It's a month, or a year (or whatever) since my last confession." Then: "These are my sins." Some form of the act of contrition should be learned, to be said while the priest is giving absolution, but this can be in any language, and in any of a dozen forms. The two essential things for the penitent are telling his sins properly and being truly sorry.

#### ONLY THE BEGINNING

Father Florentino Garcia, Spanish Augustinian, expelled from Red China as the last member of his Order on the mainland, tells the following anecdote.

To get material for accusations, a Chinese communist interrogator ordered the priest, a Jesuit, to write an account of the Jesuit Order, his province and his reactions to religious training. The priest said that he would be glad to comply and asked for four hundred sheets of paper.

"Four hundred sheets?" said the amazed official.

"Yes," replied the priest, "and that's just the introduction."

The questioning ended the same day.

Mathias Huber, C.S.S.R.

# Little Lessons in Catholic Living

## Have a Heart!

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**I**N one of his letters St. Paul has something to say about getting along with our neighbors. He tells us to have a heart — to have a heart of mercy, kindness and patience for our neighbors. "Bear with one another," he says; "bear with one another and forgive one another, if anyone has a grievance against any other; even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also forgive."

You will notice that St. Paul gives us a rather broad hint that if we are going to live in this world in the midst of our fellowmen, we must expect a bit of unpleasantness now and then — a bit of trouble with our neighbors once in a while. *Bear with one another. Forgive one another.*

It seems as though he expected us to make mistakes once in a while — all of us — for the advice was given to all in regard to everybody else. Nobody is excepted.

He expected us to step on each other's toes; not that he wanted us to do it, but *he* understood human nature and therefore knew that through human weakness we would fail and bump each other around a little more than somewhat sometimes.

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**W**E all have some faults in our character or personality. Can you, for example, get up in front of the crowd and ask, "Say, folks, anybody know of any mistakes that I make? Is there anything I do that you don't like?"

You wouldn't try that. And yet the whole crowd has to put up with you. And may the good Lord help them sometimes when they have to live in the same house with you, even in the same neighborhood, or work with you!

They have to love us no matter how hard we make it for them. Then why shouldn't we be fair and play the game honestly and love them as they must love us? Why not love them as the Saviour loves us in spite



of our sins — every one of our sins? Why not stop pointing to their faults? Look at the crown of thorns around the head of Our Lord. How many of those thorns have you put there by your sins? How many times have you helped to press them in more deeply? And does Our Lord say to you: "Look at your sins. Look what you did to Me. How can I love you?"

If you want to convince yourself that God wants you to love even those who are disagreeable to you, ask yourself: "How did this crowd get together anyhow? In our neighborhood, in our city, down at work? Why did God bring one from here and one from there?"

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**W**HY? Because He knew that this was just the right combination, the right mixture for all of us. The providence of God was responsible for it. And for the good of your soul respect the hand of God that arranges our lives for our good and His glory. God allowed all of you to get together, and He said to you: "All right, folks, go to it! Work out your salvation and help each other to get to heaven."

And then how can we look up to God and say, "Naw! It won't work. I can't put up with them because they are such downright disagreeable people. I can't overlook their faults. But, O Lord, forgive me my sins as I forgive those who fail against me. If I don't forgive them, then don't forgive me."

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**N**O! Let's not make that mistake of telling God that if we don't forgive others, we don't want forgiveness

either. But rather with St. Paul let's be prepared to find our neighbors making a few mistakes once in a while, even day after day, just as we do, and forgive them, as we hope to be forgiven. Love them in spite of their faults, just as God loves you in spite of your sins.

And remember that loving them does not mean inviting them to dinner and walking down the street arm-in-arm with them. But it does mean acting towards them like Christians, not bearing them hatred or ill will, forgiving their faults even though you cannot forget them, helping them in their need and hoping that they get to heaven as you want to get there too.

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**I**F you want to do something practical today along this line, then think of the one person who is most disagreeable to you, the one person with whom you find it impossible to get along. Before the day is over, any time, right now if you will, say just one *Our Father* for that person. Say that prayer slowly, thoughtfully, devoutly, for that person's spiritual and temporal welfare. Perhaps it will not be easy. But say it anyhow. Next time it will be easier to say it, for, of course, you are going to repeat that prayer again and again. And by the time you have prayed the *Our Father* five, ten or twenty times for that person you will find that it is much easier to get along with that person, and by your prayer you will have a heart for your neighbor, practicing the love of your neighbor whom it is not easy to love and fulfilling the law of Christ.

# SAINTS FOR THE MARRIED

## *St. Bridget of Sweden*

LOUIS G. MILLER, C.S.S.R.

THE subject of this little biography combined in her life both noble and lowly virtues. She was a great mystic, yet she delighted in discharging humble household tasks. And she might with truth be called the special patroness of mothers with large families.

St. Bridget lived in a Sweden that was entirely Catholic since it had been converted by the monks from Britain long before her time. She was born in 1303, and died in 1373. At sixteen or seventeen she was married to Ulf, a Swedish nobleman, and by him had eight children, four boys and four girls.

She knew what it was to see a child of hers die; two of her boys, Bengt and Gudmar, died while very young. She knew also what it was to have a wayward son. Karl, her oldest son, caused her much grief.

In 1343, her husband died, leaving Bridget a widow of forty years, with

some of her children still small about her. Although she greatly mourned her husband, she turned resolutely to the tasks of the future, and raised her children to be pious and God-fearing, setting them the example herself of a dedicated Catholic life.

As her children reached maturity, a new phase of Bridget's life opened up. God chose her to be the vehicle of great and stirring warnings and prophecies to the world.

The fourteenth century was a time of human weakness in the Church, perhaps an inevitable let-down from the glories of the great thirteenth century which had preceded it. There were good people and saints, but along with the wheat, weeds had begun to spring up in God's harvest-field. There was laxity in high places and low, and from it the clergy were by no means exempt. Due to turmoil and intrigue in Italy, the Popes had left their native diocese of Rome, and had taken up residence in Avig-

non, France. Even though saints like Bridget cried out for their return, the Popes were loath to leave their comfortable surroundings for the stern duty and Spartan life of Rome.

St. Bridget spent the last 24 years of her life in or near Rome, and here the greater part of her striking and fear-inspiring *Revelations* were set down on parchment and published to the world. "For a generation shall come which will receive my words with joy—another generation than this ungrateful one." In Rome she died, her surviving children around her, at the age of 70 in the year 1373. Her last words were, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

It is not however the last part of her life, but her life as a married woman that concerns us here. In that life, she practiced heroically all the virtues proper to her state. One virtue, however, seems especially appropriate to this modern day, namely, her lack of human respect and complete trust in God in carrying out the duties of her vocation. This vocation was God's will for her, and hence she would serve her husband with love and accept the children God sent her with joy.

**A**N EPISODE related by Johannes Jorgenson in his scholarly biography of St. Bridget illustrates this quality. Bridget had disagreed with her husband in the choice of a husband for their daughter; the man suggested was of poor moral worth, and Bridget, for her daughter's sake,

was much upset. Throwing herself on her knees before the crucifix, she cried out: "Lord, I cannot bear it!"

"And then she felt not only the violent beats of her own heart, but below it a tiny heart was beating . . . and she heard a tiny voice saying: 'Mother, mother, do not kill me, for if you die now, I must die too! And I want so much to live, so very much!'"

It was not long after this that Bridget knew her time had come, yet she could not bring forth her child, for she was small and slightly built. "But then they saw someone like a human being clad in a silken robe come hastily in and stand by her bed and touch all her limbs. And at once, as this person went out, the Lady Bridget gave birth to her eighth child, without pain, so that all the women standing near her wondered exceedingly. For there was no doubt that this person was the Mother of God, Mary, who also herself had said to her: 'When you were in the pains of death in childbed I went in to you and helped you; it therefore behooves you to love me much, and that you strive for your children to become my children!'"

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**M**ANY young couples today with growing families have experienced the temptation to grow discouraged. Childless couples, or those with only one or two children, seem so much more free to do the things they would like to do. Besides, there is the constant flow of thoughtless criticism and even premeditated un-

charity on the part of their families and friends. "What, another child so soon!" "Aren't you really overdoing it, my dear?"

Let such couples reflect on these principles:

1. Marriage is an honorable and holy state, and to have children, and many children, in marriage is to cooperate with the Creator Himself in His plan to fill the places of the fallen angels in heaven.

2. Where there is a question of a serious obstacle in the way of having more children, husband and wife will

not for a moment countenance the thought of contraception. Rather, they will make a virtue of their necessary abstinence, in accordance with prudent counsel and judgment. Bridget and her husband for several years lived this kind of chaste life together.

3. In all things, they will strive to preserve a calm and cheerful confidence in God, paying no heed to the shallow criticism of the world. For if they thus seek God first, and the kingdom of heaven, then for them surely Christ will keep His promise: "All else will be added to you."

### *Shining Beacon*

Our world today is full of broken marriages, children who have no real homes nor parents, adults who have become twisted, neurotic, or perhaps just aimless, superficial, bored. The Church stands for sanity in a world more and more insane. It stands for human dignity in a world where human dignity is more and more deeply attacked. It stands for deep and vital human experience in a world which grows more and more shallow.

*Today*

### *Hollywood Papers Please Copy*

The story comes out of Hong Kong of how one film star insisted on God's way being respected. Therese Li Li Hwa is queen of the Chinese movie world. Huge "sexy" ads of one of Miss Li's pictures were recently posted by one theatre chain. Miss Li was shocked when she heard of this method of advertising her film. She is a Catholic and such things are alien to her way of living and thinking . . . she has never made pictures of such a nature. Being direct and business-like, she had pictures taken of the ad to hold as evidence should it be necessary to go to court. Then she located the film officials and demanded an immediate change, staying with them until they actually sent painters to do the work. For God, Miss Li chooses to be and remain "a living doll."

*The Way*

### *Motorist's Malediction*

"May nightmares be his dismal lot,  
His bed a stone to lie on,  
Who moves into the parking spot  
Which I just had my eye on."

*Office Economist*

# Pre-Marriage CLINIC

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

## Boy-friend without Faith

**Problem:** I was considering my boy-friend a good matrimonial risk until the other night when we had a talk about religion. He told me that the last couple of years (we are both in our late teens) he has the urge to run out whenever he goes to church on Sunday. I discovered he has not been to Communion since last Easter, and has some peculiar ideas about the teachings of our faith. He refuses to take anything on faith and thinks that in the Catholic school we learn only the Catholic version of things and are not given a complete outlook. I now realize I should not think of marrying this fellow, but hate to break up with him without setting him straight. How can I convince him that he is wrong?

**Solution:** Your desire to bring this boy back to the faith he has apparently lost is very commendable and noble, but I think that the wisest thing you can do is to give him up and limit your efforts at helping him to your prayers. If you continue to go out with him there is always the danger that you may fall more and more deeply in love with him and end up by marrying him, despite his skepticism and cynicism about religion. Many a girl has continued to go out with a character of this type, with the hope and intention of changing his outlook, only to find herself eventually tied down in marriage to a hopeless renegade and scoffer.

I do not mean to say that there is never any hope of converting a man who has lost his faith. The point I make is that it is not prudent to risk a lifetime of unhappiness on the hope of such a conversion.

Your description of the boy's attitudes reveals several points that will make him, for some time to come, very hard to deal with. The fact that he feels like running out of church whenever he goes to Mass on Sunday could be a sign of mental instability in the form of strange phobias or fixations. The fact that he refuses to accept anything on faith is a sign of hopeless immaturity of mind, and probably of the influence upon him of loud-mouthed pagans and anti-clericals. The fact that he scoffs at his Catholic school training as one-sided is another sign that he has been listening to the customary sneers and jibes of those who hate the Catholic religion. If he really wanted to, he could find the answers to his doubts and difficulties, and acquire "a complete outlook."

For these reasons I say, don't take a chance by continuing to go out with this boy. Perhaps the most effective lesson you can teach him is that which will be contained in your telling him that your faith is too dear to risk by going out with a boy like him. And you can continue to pray for him always.

# Jesuit Bend Sequel

ON October second, 1955, an event took place in a quiet Louisiana village called Jesuit Bend which won newspaper space from New Orleans to Naples and to Nome. On that day a young colored priest, Father Gerald Lewis, came to offer Mass at St. Cecilia's Catholic church for the Catholics of the area. Five white men, including two officers of the law, thereupon barred him from entering the church, making it clear that because he was a Negro, his priestly ministrations were not welcome there.

Archbishop Rummel, in whose archdiocese these happenings took place, reacted promptly and vigorously. He closed St. Cecilia's "until the members of these communities would express their willingness to accept for service . . . whatever priest or priests we find it possible to send them."

It is not our purpose here to comment on the incident itself, so well publicized up and down the nation. We would rather prefer to make reference to the sympathetic reaction expressed in letters to the priest involved in the unfortunate affair. Excerpts from

these letters (which came literally from all parts of the world) appear in the January, 1956, issue of St. Augustine's Messenger, published by the Divine Word Fathers at their inter-racial seminary in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. Father Lewis is a member of this religious congregation.

From the eighth graders (white) of a New Orleans Catholic school:

" . . . We are sorry that these so-called Catholics offered such an insult to you. The altar boys of our school feel that they would be privileged to serve your Mass. The choir boys and girls would be honored to sing a High Mass for you, if we had the opportunity."

From Mrs. W.T., DeLand, Florida:

" . . . I just didn't think a thing like that would happen among Catholics. Father, I do know that in the future I will thank God more often, more fervently for the grace of being able to see that He holds all races, all colors equal."

From a South Carolina correspondent:

"Truly I am sorry that such an accident had to happen, and from

Catholics, too. A priest is a priest, be he white or black or any other color."

From a writer in New Orleans: "This letter comes to share with you the sympathy and heartache you must feel for those who profess Christ crucified, but who refuse His ministry when He comes to them with colored skin."

These few excerpts are all, it will be noted, from people in the so-called *deep south*. They indi-

cate, it seems to us, that progress toward understanding is being made, and true charity without regard to color or race does exist, even in areas where the obstacles toward such understanding and love are supposed to be insuperable.

To help break down such barriers was doubtless one of God's providential purposes in permitting the Jesuit Bend incident to happen.

#### SECRET MISSION TO RUSSIA

In the year 1937, Father Frederick Siedenberg of the University of Detroit made a journey into Russia as a member of an educational mission from the United States. He passed through Rome on his way and had an audience with the Holy Father, Pius XI. The Pope was delighted with the idea of a priest from the West penetrating the darkness which had already settled down on that unhappy country. He told Father Siedenberg he wanted him to say Mass wherever and whenever he could within the borders of Russia.

Father Siedenberg necessarily traveled in the garb of a layman and without most of the things required for the celebration of Mass. So the Holy Father, using his power of supreme ruler of the Church of Christ, gave him permission to celebrate without vestments and without consecrated vessels. Alone, without any assistance, he was to perform the nec-

essary actions of the sacred liturgy, the offertory, the consecration and the communion.

And that is the way Father Siedenberg was privileged to say Mass in Russia. The plain drinking glass which he had used for a chalice, he put in his suitcase. Inspired by the deepest reverence and fearing that such a sacred object might revert to profane use, he dropped it into the Atlantic Ocean on his way home.

Pope Pius XI and Father Siedenberg were at one in the thought, which we all share, that nothing could be done in Russia that would give greater glory to God and draw down more abundantly His mercy and His grace on the Russian people than one more priest among them and one more Mass offered up in their midst even without their knowledge.

*Jesuit Bulletin*



# Problems of Professional People

## The Catholic Conscience of the Catholic Legislator

If a Catholic is a member of a legislative body, either of state or of nation, to what extent should he allow his Catholic principles to influence his approval or rejection of proposed legislation?

It is an accepted principle in the United States that all religious bodies should receive equal treatment from the government; and the Catholics of our land are in full agreement with this principle. It is surely the most feasible procedure in a country such as ours, where the citizens profess so many different religious beliefs. Hence, any legislation affecting the various religious groups should be entirely free from discrimination, and the Catholic legislator should regard it as a matter of conscience to adhere strictly to the principle of equal civil rights for all. Even if the occasion were offered of showing some special favor to the Catholic Church, a conscientious Catholic legislator will not take advantage of it. For example, if a measure is proposed granting tax exemption to church property, he will vote for equal privileges for all forms of organized religion. If legislation is proposed giving parochial school children bus transportation, the Catholic legislator should insist that the same facilities shall be available to Protestant and Jewish children as to Catholic children.

However, when the natural law, the law of God which binds all men irrespective of their religious beliefs, is at stake,

the Catholic legislator may not compromise on the score that some non-Catholics interpret the natural law differently from Catholics. Indeed, at the present day there are some who entirely reject the idea of a natural law and look on the rules of morality as merely conventional standards, changeable with the passing of the years. Hence, the Catholic legislator cannot in conscience favor any enactments that would legalize the killing of persons who are mentally defective or hopelessly ill — “mercy killing” as it is called. Neither may he approve of laws that would inflict sterilization on persons judged incapable of parenthood. Similarly, he may not vote for laws that would degrade the holiness of marriage by permitting divorce — unless, indeed, such laws would tighten the present divorce laws, since he would thus be upholding a lesser evil in circumstances in which nothing better can be attained.

The Catholic legislator need make no apology for taking this stand regarding the natural law. Despite the protests of some citizens he will thus help to maintain the internal strength of our nation and to protect it from immoral principles and practices.

Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R.,  
S.T.D., LL.D.

The Catholic University of America

# WHY NOT ADOPT?

Some practical reasons  
for and against  
the adoption of a child.

THOMAS TOBIN, C.S.S.R.

**A**S director of the League of St. Gerard, some of the most distressing letters that I receive are from women who have not been blessed with children. Sometimes these letters reveal a bitterness against God and all women fortunate enough to be mothers; more often these letters are a torrent of words baring a frustrated heart and a confused mind.

The story of each woman is basically the same. Marriage to them meant children, and they never dreamed that they would ever have any difficulty in having the children they desired. But as the months turned into years and as the wedding anniversaries began to slip by they became very concerned. Trips to the doctors, usually one doctor after another, resulted in many tests, pills, shots and, at times, corrective surgery — all this pain and expense undergone in their great desire to have children. No cost was too great to pay for the privilege of holding their own child.

Some of these women have never even known the brief joy of a short pregnancy; many have carried babies for months only to experience the heartbreak of a miscarriage; others have carried the baby for the full time only to have the baby stillborn.

These letters ring out with the eternal *Why*? "Why doesn't God send us a child? Why do so many couples have children when they do not want them and do not care for them after they are born? Why are we not worthy of motherhood? What have we done to bring on this punishment from God?"

**T**HESE are some of the questions that I receive very often in the course of my work. I do not intend to answer them here. The only real answer is in the inscrutable and loving will of God. But these questions do give rise to a possible solution in the adoption of a child. It is extremely difficult to lay down general norms that will fit individual cases, but it is not impossible to present some rules as a guide for couples who are faced with the problem of whether to adopt or not.

## REASONS AGAINST ADOPTING

1. *The Will of God.* One of the reasons alleged against adoption is an appeal to the will of God. The argument is developed in this manner. If God wanted us to have children He would have sent them to us. Hence to adopt children would be to go against the will of God. But a ready answer to this objection is found in the same will of God which permits childless homes so that homeless children may have the love and care they need.

There is no need to develop the point that the personalized care of a father and mother in a home is much preferable to the institutionalized care of an orphan home. This truth is so evident that many social agencies are making almost exclusive use of foster homes for non-adoptable children. In line with this thinking we can say that a childless couple would be doing something good in harmony with God's will in adopting a child. It might be well to mention that there is no obligation to adopt a child and there is no sin involved in not adopting. On the contrary, sometimes the circumstances of a couple, which circumstances are a sign of God's will, indicate that an adoption would not be wise.

2. *The Responsibility is Too Great.* Some timorous souls are afraid of the responsibilities connected with the raising of a child and are reluctant to assume the burden of the care of some one else's child. They feel that the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual education of a child de-

mands such wisdom, love and patience that it would be foolhardy to adopt. The thought of the care of a helpless baby is frightening; the prospect of the direction of a teen-ager is terrifying. Admittedly, there are difficulties in the raising of children, but there are also many compensations — the love of the children, the pleasure of watching them mature to manhood and womanhood, the knowledge that they are children of God. Another point to help allay such fears is the conviction that God's grace is omnipotent and all this omnipotence lies in wait for those who ask for it. It is well to remember that God will not be outdone in generosity.

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Unhappiness is found in not knowing what we want and killing ourselves to get it.

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3. *The Child's Background.* Prospective adopting parents often worry about the background of the child's real parents. There can be the suspicion that the mother is an unmarried girl and can not be a good girl if she is willing to give up her baby. But adopting parents should remember that even a good girl can make one mistake and get into trouble. The bad girls do not have babies, as it is so easy to prevent pregnancy or terminate it by abortion.

A girl who pays for her mistake by the mental and physical anguish of pregnancy and delivery and who has enough maternal love to give her

baby a true home is worthy of admiration. I am sure that God is pleased with her.

It is worth mentioning that unmarried mothers have great difficulty in parting with their children. So often the final argument that leads them to decide to place the baby for adoption is to call on their mother's love which unselfishly prefers the welfare of the baby to their own happiness. These remarks are not made to cause anyone to conclude that all babies given for adoption are the children of unmarried mothers. A home that is broken by death or divorce will lead a parent to allow a child to be adopted.

In this matter of the background of the child it is well to emphasize the importance of environment in the development of the child. Psychologists debate the relative value of heredity and environment. Without entering into the pros and cons of it, it can safely be stated that most authorities hold that environment and training are more important. Adopting parents can and have done very much for children, and adopted children have become valuable citizens and solidly religious men and women.

*4. We Might Still Have Our Own Children.* Many couples hesitate to adopt because they are still young and feel that they might still have children of their own. This is a good point to consider as parents who adopt later on have children of their own often enough to give rise to the consideration. But even if the couple

are blessed with children, experience shows that the adopted child fits right into the family without any problem. The greater consideration might be just this that the reason why a couple does have a child is that they have adopted!

This statement calls for an explanation. With an adopted child a wife feels less nervous and frustrated. She is kept so busy and is so happy that she hasn't either the time or the inclination to think too much about herself. Thus psychologically relaxed she is better able to conceive and carry a child.

#### REASONS FOR ADOPTING

*1. Need of the Child.* There are many children who need homes now. The fact that there are not as many children as couples who wish to adopt does not destroy the truth of this need of children for homes. Even in their earliest years children demand a sense of security that can be adequately satisfied only in a home. They want to belong, to be loved and to be needed, which wants can be taken care of fully in the tender and loving care of a mother and father who really desire the child. It stands to reason that the needs of the children are the important factors in adoption.

*2. Need of the Couple.* The adopting couple must adopt not to satisfy their selfish needs but to help the needs of the child. Adoption is not the answer in the case of a shaky marriage. It will not hold a tottering marriage together but will only pro-

vide another reason for quarreling. The child will be the object of a tug of war between the husband and wife and will be deeply torn in the process. Childless couples who are given to selfish bickering will be the same after adoption, only more so. A bad marriage will not be made good by the presence of a child.

The only proper viewpoint of such a couple must be an unselfish desire to care for the child. Their predominant thought must not be: what can the child give us, but, what can we give the child? They must give not only material security but emotional security to the child. A couple who would think more of themselves than of the child would never find the happiness that a child can bring to a home. The greater their love for the child the more will they give in sacrifice. "We give in proportion as we love. The greater the love, the greater the gift." But such self-sacrificing parents will learn the great paradox of life that in giving they will also receive. "He that shall find his life shall first lose it." In thinking of the child and caring for it they will suddenly realize that there is true happiness in their home because love and its test, sacrifice, are present.

#### WHEN ADOPT?

The problem of the proper time to adopt is a very difficult one because of the varying individual circumstances. But with some misgivings I offer the following suggestions.

If it is medically impossible to have a child, the couple should place their application at once. If there is

some hope for a child, they should wait for several years. If the wife has never become pregnant for five or six years and the doctor holds out little or no hope, it might be wise to place an application for adoption. If there have been several miscarriages and medical opinion is that there is not much chance of carrying a baby to term, it would be the proper time to adopt. If a couple has only one child, and after several years the doctor informs them that they very likely will never have another child, they might start giving serious thought to adoption.

These are some of the possible situations in which adoption might be indicated. Several cautions might be in order. Do not wait so long that the agency will not place a baby with you. Be certain to consult your doctor and also your confessor or pastor.

#### HOW ADOPT?

Once the decision to adopt has been made, the next question is about the correct procedure to follow. There are two ways: the doubtful and the certain way.

1. *The Doubtful Way.* This way is the private method of adoption through a doctor, lawyer or the mother. It is safer through a doctor or a lawyer, but it is still a doubtful way. To adopt directly from the mother or from friends or relatives is extremely doubtful and so often is an unsafe method. There are several reasons that make this a doubtful manner of adopting. First, there is no assurance that the baby will be phy-

sically and mentally sound. Secondly, there is a real danger that the mother will want her child back, or at least want to see the child. There have been cases where the mother has continued to blackmail the adopting parents for sums of money under the threat that she will try to get the child back or at least tell the child who the true mother is. This private way is not a recommended method.

2. *The Certain Way.* The safer manner is to go to a recognized social agency. For instance, each diocese has a Catholic Social Welfare Agency that handles adoptions. In this way the parents are assured of a normal child and the identity of the mother is kept secret. Even the baptismal certificate is made in the name of the adopting parents. The couple should first of all see their pastor who will tell them the correct procedure.

#### HAPPY PARENTS

It would be appropriate to bring this article to a conclusion by quoting passages from two letters that the League of St. Gerard has received.

"My husband and I were married for three years and wanted a child so much. I had gone to several doctors and they all told us it was highly improbable that we would be able to have children. We never lost faith that some day we would have children of our own, but we immediately tried to adopt a child. After many novenas and prayers we were able to adopt a darling little boy. A year lat-

er we adopted another little boy and a little girl. Continually we gave thanks for our precious little family and also prayed that we would some day be blessed with a child of our own. I wore the St. Gerard medal constantly and recited the prayers every day. Last November I gave birth to a fine, healthy boy. I was in excellent health throughout the pregnancy and, although the doctor thought there might be a little difficulty at delivery, I amazed everyone by an easy and very quick delivery with only a few hours of labor. With four pre-school children we are very busy, but we have so much fun with the little ones that our burden is very light. Thank God for our family of four!"

"Four months ago we became parents of a beautiful baby boy. We are so thrilled and so happy. Our house has now become a home and we have so many heavenly friends to thank. 'Thank you' seems so formal when a priceless jewel, an immortal soul has been entrusted to our care. The great responsibility almost leaves one breathless! While I have never experienced the joy of motherhood, I now have that joy in just as wonderful a form. We, my husband and I, are so happy with our beloved one, our adopted son. He is the whole world to us, and God willing, we pray for more. We feel so deeply honored at this great favor."

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A move is under way to abolish the exclamation point. People aren't surprised at anything any more.

# SIDEGLANCES

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By the Bystander

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The task of upholding the rule of right reason in morality and the Christian principles according to which human beings save or lose their immortal souls sometimes becomes very tedious and disheartening. It is especially so in the face of the power of the propaganda of apparently intellectual and socially prominent bigwigs, who pervert the power of thinking and even lie about the facts of history to serve immoral causes that they have chosen to promote.

A case in point is that of Mrs. Agnes Meyer's crusade in behalf of widespread knowledge and use of birth-prevention techniques. She is the chatterbox wife of the chairman of the board of the *Washington Post-Times Herald*; she writes not only in her husband's paper, but in other publications as well; and she is not one to dodge opportunities to make speeches. She was considered prominent enough to deserve to be interviewed on the widely viewed television program of Edward Murrow, *Person to Person*. Because of her social and literary prominence, many men and women are apt to listen with more reverence to what she has to say on moral subjects than her kind of thinking deserves. Take as an instance her recent address to the annual luncheon of the Planned Parenthood Committee of the Mother's Health Club in New York. In it she used misrepresentations of Christian his-

tory and teaching as a backdrop for her own moral pronouncements, which actually undermine all Christian morality.

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Her first misrepresentation of Christian history and teaching is phrased in these words: "Medical men, like most Americans, have been brought up in the Christian tradition that sex is sin, and the whole birth-control problem gets caught in this complex." The fact is that there has been no genuine Christian tradition to the effect that "sex is sin." The Manichean heresy of the first few centuries of Christianity taught that sex is sin, and it was driven into oblivion by the arguments of Christian teachers. Some of the Puritan sects of modern Protestantism seemed to preach that sex is a sinful thing, but their voices soon died away. The teaching of Christ and the New Testament, handed down in the unbroken traditions of the Catholic Church for 1900 years, is that sex is a noble and marvellous faculty given to human beings by Almighty God. It takes its nobility from its sublime purpose, which is to share with God the power of procreation. True, it is a power that can be abused, and it has always been necessary for the Church to warn her children against the abuse of sex. Anti-Catholic fanatics like to read into such warnings the proposition that sex is bad in itself, but that proposition has never been there. For Mrs. Meyer to quote



Christian tradition as maintaining that sex is something bad in itself, and to make that the reason for the Church's designation of birth-prevention as evil, is either crass ignorance or immoral dishonesty.

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Another misrepresentation: Mrs. Meyer states that "the Christian heritage is that woman is mentally and morally inferior to man." We do not know by what tricks of argumentation this statement is made to explain the Church's opposition to birth-prevention: but we do know that the statement itself is absolutely false. It is no part of the genuine Christian tradition that women are mentally and, above all, morally inferior to men. The best proof that it is false is to be found in the fact that the one human being whom the Christian heritage places closest to God, most worthy of imitation by both women and men, most responsible, after Christ and under His will and decree, for uplifting mankind, is a woman, the immaculate Virgin-Mother of Christ, Mary. God Himself put an end to all pre-Christian tendencies of men to consider women their inferiors by choosing the woman Mary to be His Mother, and the Christian heritage since that time has rebuked every heretical effort to drag women down again. No doubt Mrs. Meyer has all sorts of objections to the place given to Mary in the true Christian heritage; but she is certainly ignorant or dishonest when she quotes that heritage as looking down on women.

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Against a background of such falsifications come the new principles of morality according to the gospel of Mrs. Agnes Meyer. Here is one: "Married women have a right to sex life without the burden of unwanted children." Now this is a blunt way of expressing the inevitable conclusion to which all pagans come: that sex pleasure is a good in itself, unrelated to any purpose of the Creator, and therefore something that an individual has a

right to demand and indulge under all circumstances. Why, under this philosophy, limit it only to married men or women? Reason, revelation, and the whole tenor of Christian civilization, make the use of sex legitimate only in marriage because they make it clear that the use of sex is specifically related to a primary and necessary purpose that can be rightly fulfilled only in marriage, namely, the procreation and rearing of children. Take away that purpose, as Mrs. Meyer does, and the secondary purpose of sex, which is the mutual pleasure and happiness of a husband and wife, becomes primary. But there is no good reason for limiting that to married people, once the primary purpose has been scuttled. Anybody is capable of enjoying sex pleasure "without the burden of unwanted children." If this is a good in itself, it is a good for the single as well as the married. Logically, therefore it can be said that Mrs. Meyer is sounding a plea for the legitimizing of self-abuse, fornication, adultery, even the vile forms of perversion into which Godless people so often descend. If married people may enjoy sex "without the burden of unwanted children," there is no sound reason for denying the same privilege to the unmarried. And that, Mrs. Meyer, will turn the world into a cesspool.

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Here is another of Mrs. Meyer's pronouncements: "Children from the age of five onward should be given sex instruction in the schools." Until this is done, she threatens, "never will we be able to raise a new generation with a wholesome, honest and reverent appreciation that the sexual drive is a major factor in life, and has raised mankind from a mere animal existence to the highest manifestations of civilization and culture."

Only the most perverse of scholars could project the view that civilization and culture stem from the sex urge in man.

Coming on top of the statement that the sexual drive need not be related to the procreation of children, this is as good a way of promoting juvenile delinquency, pre-teen-age and teen-age sensuality, even prostitution and degeneracy, as can be found.

Experience proves to anyone who has ever had personal contact with and the intimate confidence of children that each one requires individual attention and treatment in the matter of sex instruction. Parents are the only ones who can safely and effectively handle this matter for their own children. Publicly given information and instruction, to large groups of children, can lead to the most dire results. But when the instructor begins with the pagan thesis that the sex function need not be related to the procreation of children, as Mrs. Meyer expresses it, then the effect on children can be nothing short of disastrous.

In these days of widespread alarm over the number of unwed mothers found in high schools, of abortions that sometimes kill and sometimes scar teen-aged girls for life, of contraceptive-carrying high school

boys and girls, it is a horrible example of misguided zeal, if not diabolic perversity, to find an elderly matron of high social standing urging that all youngsters from the age of five on be steeped in a premature and publicly given knowledge of sex. This is bound to make curiosity, concupiscence and experimentation more and more irresistible.

Christians and Catholics who respect sex as a great gift of God, and yet are conscious of the battle each human being must wage within himself not to abuse this gift, must recognize at a glance the fatuity and peril of views like those of Mrs. Meyer. They must cling all the more tightly to the teachings of Christ, and the true heritage of their Christian faith, which reject the deifying of sex, as if its pleasure were the goal of man's existence. They must think of St. Paul's words to the early Christians about the pagans around them, whenever they hear or see such statements as we have quoted from Mrs. Meyer: "Who, when they knew God, glorified Him not as God; wherefore God gave them up to a corrupt sense so that they . . . abused their own bodies among themselves."

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### *Gift for a Baby*

The story of the Three Kings was being reviewed from the previous lesson by a Missionary Sister of the Holy Ghost, in Africa.

"And who can tell me what were the gifts of the Magi to the Infant Saviour?" asked the Sister.

"Gold," answered one promptly.

"The stuff that makes smoke at Benediction," chimed in a second.

Little foreheads were furrowed in deep thought before a hand appeared for gift number three. Finally the hand of little Adjua, well-versed in the care of babies on the African Gold Coast, was triumphantly raised as she declared:

"Vaseline!"

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It isn't the stubbornness of the mule or his power to kick that makes him useful, but his great ability to pull when he wants to.

## IN CASE OF MISCARRIAGE

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**I**T is a fundamental teaching of the Catholic Church that baptism is absolutely necessary for anyone to reach heaven. This teaching is based on the words of Christ: "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

From the beginning the Church has distinguished three kinds or modes of baptism, namely, of water, of blood and of desire. Martyrs who die for the faith, without having had the opportunity for baptism with water, are said to have been baptized in their own blood. Baptism of desire applies to those (such as savages in hidden jungles) who have no opportunity to know of or to receive baptism of water, but who, with their God-given intelligence, acknowledge the Creator and follow the natural law as reflected in their own conscience.

The only ones who are incapable of baptism of desire are those who do not have the use of their intelligence and reasoning power. For such as these there is no substitute for baptism of water.

That is why the Church is so anxious to see infants baptized as soon as possible after birth and makes it a serious obligation for parents. That is why, in the case

of the sudden and premature birth of a child, if the child seems dead or dying, the Church begs anyone present (supposing the priest cannot be quickly reached) to administer the sacrament.

Even in the case of a miscarriage, conditional baptism should, when possible, be administered, on the chance that there might be some spark of life in the tiny unformed child. An excellent leaflet, called *Spiritual First Aid Procedures*, published by the Queen's Work Press, sets down very succinctly what should be done in such a case:

"Break the membranes or blood clot surrounding the embryo. Immerse it in a pan of water, making sure the water contacts the fetus. Then while moving it about in the water, say the words of conditional baptism:

'If you are capable, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.'"

Surely it will be a source of much consolation to mothers who suffer a miscarriage to know that this spiritual precaution can and should be made use of. It is true, the little ones in Limbo do not suffer in any way, and will, it seems to us, know their mothers' love in some way in the next life. Yet even if the possibility of a valid baptism be small, mothers will find joy in the thought that the means have been used which might bring the little one into the vision of God.

# *For Wives and Husbands Only*

Donald F. Miller, C.S.S.R.

## **Resentment against Excommunication**

*Problem:* I am an ex-Catholic: I married a Baptist girl in a Baptist church. God has blessed our marriage. We are wonderfully happy and I know deep down in my heart that everything is all right. However you say in one of your articles on marriage that there is a stigma placed on me by the Catholic Church. I am excommunicated and supposed to be living in adultery. Really I don't think so. We say grace at meals and attend Sunday school and even other services. How then can the priest of my last church take my name from the veterans' scroll and tell all my friends I am excommunicated? Isn't God my Judge? Didn't He die to save me? If I have committed a sin and asked forgiveness, how can any priest deny me my right to heaven? What can I tell my Catholic friends who have heard that I am lost?

*Solution:* Yes, God will be your only Judge, and if it was as a result of real ignorance that you gave up the one true religion, God will surely take that into full account when He judges you at the end of your life.

It is difficult, however, to understand why you should be so resentful of the excommunication imposed on you by the Catholic Church when you clearly asked for it. Informed Catholics know that marriage is a sacrament entrusted by Christ to His Church, and that Catholics can be validly and sacramentally married only before a priest and two witnesses. They know that it is a great sin for a Catholic to attempt marriage outside the Church, and

that the sin continues as long as he lives in such an attempted marriage. They know that the Catholic Church tries to help him realize the greatness of his sin and of the scandal given by inflicting the punishment of excommunication (if he attempted marriage before a minister.) Excommunication does not mean that he is irrevocably lost; it only means that he must repair his scandal, show special sorrow, give up his sin, and take special steps to return to the reception of the sacraments and the assurance of heaven.

If you have decided that the Catholic Church is not the true Church of Christ, and that you would leave it, you will be judged by God, who founded His Church, on the basis of your culpable or inculpable ignorance of what you were doing. But the Church has to accept your actions, in disobeying her serious laws, in calling yourself an ex-Catholic, in joining another religious sect, as infidelity and rebellion against her. To lessen the scandal you have given to others, and to impress you with the seriousness of what you have done, she declares you excommunicated. That is what you wanted and that is what you chose.

What will you tell your Catholic friends? Tell them the truth. Tell them that you desired to be excommunicated by the Catholic Church. But also, do some thinking about it. Ask yourself whether you are really so ignorant of the truth that you don't have to fear God's judgment.

# MAY MARY and AMERICAN MEN

May is the month of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a story about the Blessed Virgin Mary—the Blessed Virgin Mary and the month of May. It is also about the second world war.

WE, A band of American soldiers of whom I was the chaplain, were on the Anzio beach-head in Italy — had been for several months. Freshly smoothed-out sand marked the place near the sea where lay a good number of our buddies who had fallen on the day of the landing and during the many days of attack and defense that followed the landing. For all we knew, our turn to fall would be next. We were quite certain that we would get a turn. The only question was whether our turn would come next or the time after next. That's how bad things were.

Enemy soldiers were looking down our throats. Dug into the hills that guarded the approaches to Rome on the one side (the north) and overlooked the perfectly flat plain that flowed out from the sea on the other (the south), they kept their guns

trained on our movements. We were deep in holes of our own on the plain. But we had to come to the surface sometime. We couldn't be forever submerged. The moment we did come to the surface we were shot at. It is difficult to say how many men died during February, March and April of that grueling operation.

And then came May.

ONE early morning, just as dawn was breaking, we were on our way back from the holes up front after having turned over our position to fresh troops under the cover of the night's darkness. As we trudged through the rubble of smashed homes and tangled telephone wires that littered the ground, one of the soldiers called out to me, "Father, look!" He pointed to a heap of broken masonry and-splintered wood.

I looked; but I saw nothing out of the ordinary. If the soldier was calling my attention to a house that had been blown down by a shell, he was showing signs of cracking. All the houses in the area were blown down. I looked again. Then I saw what he

was pointing to. It was a framed picture, sticking crazily out of a crack in a basement foundation.

"Go and get it and bring it over," I said.

A moment later we were examining a picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a bit dusty and torn but without a doubt a likeness of the mother of God. The lady in the picture was not along the lines of a Hollywood star or of the feminine model that accompanies most of the modern advertising in the United States. Nor did she have the contrived sparkle that comes from the use of the right kind of toothpastes and soaps and facial appliances and applications. She seemed unconcerned about the current hair-do and the stylishly up-to-the-minute clothing.

But she possessed a dignity, immediately recognized by the soldiers. And she had a beauty that was deeper than her skin and the clothes she wore. She was a lady, a queen—there was no doubt about that fact at all. We all knew, even the Protestant soldiers (the Protestant men learned a great deal about the Catholic religion during the war that they would never have learned had they remained always in civilian life) that this was a picture of the maid of Nazareth, of the mother of God. Perhaps it was a very ancient picture. It seemed definitely to be a precious picture.

**I**N THE arms of the mother of God was the Infant Jesus. One of His sandals was coming off His foot. It was hanging only by a string. In each

upper corner of the picture was an angel, one holding in his hands a cross, the other a spear and a stick topped with a sponge. The Infant Jesus seemed to be afraid of the angels and was clinging tight to His mother. She in turn had a look of sorrow on her face as though she had a pretty good idea as to the significance of the visit of the angels and the murderous-looking instruments that they were bearing.

I looked around to find a civilian from whom I might learn the name of the person or persons to whom the picture belonged. But there were no civilians to be seen. Civilians had a habit of growing quite scarce when shells began bursting in their neighborhood and foreign aircraft began droning overhead. There really was nobody to whom I could entrust the picture, nobody who could take care of it until the people returned to whom it belonged and in the midst of whose destroyed house it had been discovered by the soldier.

There was only one thing to do, and that was to write on the back of the picture the exact location of its finding; and then, until such time as it could be given back to its rightful owners, keep it, carry it along on all campaigns. In this extremely dangerous pocket of death in which we found ourselves, we might have in our service a strong ally who knew the meaning of death first-hand—her husband and her Son—and who, because of her courage at the time of her tragedies had been given the power to help others on whose

shoulders the same cross had been laid.

I turned to the soldier. "Carry the picture along with you," I told him. He put it under his arm, and we continued on our journey.

FROM that time on, the picture of the Blessed Virgin Mary occupied a very important place in our unit. It went with us wherever we went. It went into the lines of battle, taking its chance of survival as did the men who carried it. On one occasion it was struck, the Blessed Virgin receiving a bullet through the shoulder, for which reason she was decorated with the purple heart with appropriate solemnity and rite.

The decorating was done privately, of course, so that the non-Catholic men would not be forced to attend a service in which possibly they had no belief. But a good part of the battalion was on hand, and one of the sergeants who was a hard man, but a man with a deep and unshakeable faith in the things of the spirit, pinned the medal on the dress of the Blessed Virgin below the wound, and all the outfit offered a smart salute to her who had shed her blood in the cause of freedom.

But even as the picture saw the battles of the front lines, so also did it see the quiet of the rest areas, which in many senses was more dangerous for the men than the zinging of the bullets and the whumping of the shells. More devils lurked in the sectors of rest than in the sectors of combat. Probably few men lost their souls who were called upon to put

#### OUR LADY AND JET PILOTS

The Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, has a chapel containing a statue of Our Lady which is unique. She is holding in one hand a Navy Cutlass jet, while her other hand is raised above the plane in a gesture of protection and symbolizes the desire of Catholic naval pilots to have the Blessed Virgin pray to her Son for their safety while in the air.

A tapestry hangs behind the statue on which are pinned the wings of thirty-eight naval pilots. After the wings have been blessed by the chaplain, the pilot pins one set to his uniform and a duplicate set to the tapestry, thus showing his desire for the prayers of Christ's Mother when he goes aloft.

The chapel is named in honor of Our Lady of Loreto, and since she is the patroness of aviators under that particular title, a fragment of material from the famous shrine in Italy lies at her feet.

in an appearance before God from the jumping off place of a foxhole or an observation post within calling distance of the enemy. One cannot be so certain of the fate and the fortune of those other men who leaped suddenly into God's presence from the luxury, the temptation, the bad example and the poisoned atmosphere of the rest camp that he was permitted to frequent as a means of refurbishing both soul and body.

The picture of the Blessed Virgin acted as a kind of conscience for the men. Soldiers oftentimes allow themselves to become quite raw and rough not only in their manner of speech



but also in their manner of acting. War always has the effect of destroying the amenities of life—the niceties of politeness and kindness and consideration, the respect that is due to women and the right of the weak, the customs of culture and civilization that it took centuries and the revelations and graces of Christianity to implant and to cultivate in the souls and the lives of human beings. Soldiers who spend long periods of time in combat are inclined to retrograde to the elemental in life. Anything unessential to the preservation of life and to the enjoyment of the fundamental and earthy pleasures of life is cast aside as waste.

The mother of God, through her picture, did a great deal to prevent this decay of minds and morals. She kept the men mindful of their duty not to destroy themselves in the valiant effort they were putting forth to preserve themselves and their way of life, without at the same time bringing them to that point of spit and polish demanded by the beribboned brass.

I saw this protective and uplifting influence more than once. One of the men would be giving free vent to his disgust for all things connected with armies, even American armies, with wars, with officers, with the mud and blood that had been his daily bread for longer than he could remember. His language would be vile. In the midst of his tirade a voice would cry out, and it would be the voice of one just as tired of war as the other, "Easy, Mac. There's a lady present."

Such a statement, coming from a man, might bring one to the conclusion that the soldiers of my unit were effeminate and not real men at all. The very opposite was the truth. They were hard men, at times even harsh men. They had wallowed in their share of blood, both their own blood and the blood of the enemy. They knew how to shoot a gun, and if duty and necessity called for it, to slit a throat with the sharp edge of a bayonet. Softness, in the sense of weakness, was a word and a trait they knew nothing about.

If they kept themselves in check instead of reverting to the level of the animals on the score that the life they were leading was nothing more than the life of the jungle, it was because they believed that a lady was always present even though the only proof they had of her presence was her picture.

A MAN does not have to be a sissy to believe that there is a God whom you cannot see, and wonderful people around God whom you cannot see either, but who are sent down here on earth to make the griefs and grindings of daily experience a little easier to bear. My men believed that the picture of the Blessed Virgin was only a picture. But it was a reminder to them that the Blessed Virgin in a real sense of the word was never very far away. This helped them to cleaner and better lives. When the word went out, "Easy, Mac, there's a lady present," they actually believed that there was a lady present. And they acted accordingly. They buttoned up their lips and stuck their

tongues back in their throats where they belonged. They quit shooting off their mouths.

It was our custom to have a service in honor of the Blessed Virgin at least once a week no matter where we were. Sometimes this service would have to be held in the open, perhaps in a field that had become a swamp of mud through a long period of rain. The picture was hung up on the trunk of a sagging and shredded tree, or it was leaned against a stone on the ground in the soup-like mud, and the men arranged themselves around it and said their prayers and sang their songs. And the attention of the angels was called to the sorry mess in which the mother of God and her companion soldiers were spending their days.

At other times the service would be held in a grand cathedral that happened to be in the line of march. The poor battered picture with its purple heart would be carried up the aisle and leaned against a pillar in the sanctuary. And once more the prayers would rise and the hymns cry out. And once more the angels would look down and weep.

So it was throughout the whole of Europe that we traveled. She went with us wherever we went as long as we could keep her with us. She shared with us whatever we had, both the easy and the hard. And she saw to it that what we got as a reward for our life of war and battle was good. We kept the faith. What's better than that?

Some of the men, of course, never returned home — I mean home to the States where mother and father, wife and children awaited them. They went to a better and a truer home, the home where Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin live in person. I know that they went to heaven. I was with them when the journey started. I helped them on the way. That's the wonderful power and privilege that a priest has.

But the one who accompanied them on all the trip to heaven even as she accompanied them on their tragic trip through the blighted, broken areas of war was the Blessed Virgin whose picture had been accidentally discovered and fortunately rescued from the rubble so many months before. She it was who introduced the fallen soldiers of my unit to Almighty God and to the delights of heaven. What a contrast it must have been to what they left behind!

THE war is long over now, and the picture has been sent back to its rightful owner, on the wall of whose home it undoubtedly occupies an honored place. The dust and dirt have been removed and the bullet hole patched. The soldiers who survived took away the purple heart and kept it as a memento. The owner might not have understood its meaning. The picture looks almost like new, almost as though it had never fallen from its place on the wall, almost as though it had never known the company of American soldiers and the sharp and piercing agonies of war.

The Blessed Virgin knows better. We know better. And someday not too long from now we shall recount our memories together. More and more of the men are joining the ranks of those who have gone ahead in or-

der to make the preliminary arrangements for the great reunion. At the appointed time the remaining ones will join them. What a reunion that will be! It will last forever.

## Thoughts for the Shut-in

### The Way of the Cross

Among various private devotions which can be made use of by shut-ins, there is one which can prove a special source of strength and consolation. We refer to the stations of the cross.

"Stations of the Cross!" some readers may exclaim. "That particular devotion is surely out of the question for me. I am bedridden and can't even get to church, much less walk around the fourteen stations."

No matter how completely bedridden a person may be, he can still make the way of the cross.

Ordinarily, of course, it is true that to gain the indulgences of this ancient devotion, one must proceed from one station to the next until the fourteen are completed. Or at least one must be present in church when the priest and servers, representing the congregation, make this pious journey.

But for the sick a special concession has been made. Upon any kind of crucifix, large or small, there can be placed by an authorized priest the so-called "blessing of the stations of the cross." A crucifix thus blessed may be used by a shut-in at any time in the following manner. Holding it in his hands, he recites either aloud or quietly within his heart 20 Our Fathers, 20 Hail Marys, and 20 Glory be to the Fathers, while thinking of our Lord's Passion. If so gravely ill that it is impossible for him to say the specified prayers, it will suffice if he kisses the blessed crucifix, or gazes at it with devotion, while saying a little prayer in memory of the Passion, such as "My Jesus, mercy, through the merits of Thy sacred wounds."

Not only shut-ins can profit by this wonderful privilege, but all who are at the time legitimately prevented from making the stations in church, such as travellers, prisoners, those nursing the sick, and busy mothers whose work impedes.

Many priests are empowered to place this blessing on crucifixes and will gladly do so upon being asked. But if you are a shut-in and the priest who visits you does not have the faculty, you can secure one of these blessed crucifixes without obligation by writing to Father Matthew Miller, O.F.M., Franciscan Apostolate of the Way of the Cross, 49 Rawson Rd., Brookline, 46, Mass. Father Matthew has made it his life work to encourage devotion to the stations, and has sent out thousands of these crosses to shut-ins all over the world.

Certainly we could give no better recommendation to our shut-in readers than that they make the way of the cross in this simple fashion each day, thus uniting their sufferings with the sufferings of Christ.



# readers retort

In which readers are invited to express their minds on articles and opinions published in *The Liguorian*. Letters must be signed and full address of the writer must be given, though city and name will be withheld from publication on request.

## When Is a Law Inviolable?

"Assuming your definition of 'inviolable' to be the same as Webster's — namely, a state of being kept unbroken and not transgressed, I would like to ask on what grounds you say in *Sideglances* of the March issue, 'It (the Catholic Church) accepts the Church Christ founded as the only means through which the Son of God could make certain, once He Himself had left the world, that His teaching and His moral law would be kept inviolable to the end of time.' I fail to find that it has been kept inviolable by yours or any other church, unless, unknown to me, there is justification to be found in Christ's teachings and His way of life for such hideous crimes as history has accredited to Catholicism. Many modern injustices could be cited, but the three examples which stand out are the infamous Inquisitions, the first occurring during the Middle Ages under the direction of Pope Innocent (what an appropriate title!) III. It was a twenty-year nightmare of bloodshed, persecution, and destruction. Following close on its tail was the one in Spain with the cruel death and expulsion of vast numbers of Jews and Moors. The last came after the Council of Trent, and was no less savage than its predecessors. True, the Church did not burn the victims herself. Like Pilate, she washed her hands of the blood she left secular authorities to shed.

While holding your Church up to be the only example of truth and perfection, you might stop praising her long enough to take humble note of the fact that communist methods, so despised by freedom loving people, are exactly the same employed by the Catholic Inquisitors. The secrecy of the trials, the refusal to divulge the names of the accusers so that the accused might answer them, the full and accurate records kept by the court, and the use of torture to extort confessions. Let us all pray that Russia fails as miserably to stamp out man's God-given rights as did Rome!

I don't expect to see my question printed in the READERS RETORT. First, I don't think you will have an answer of sufficient moral reasoning to print before a Catholic public. Second, I don't think you will have any answer. If it is printed, I don't expect to see it in its entirety, because the mass of blindly believing Catholics is shielded from such thinking, on the grounds that it is heretical. A cowardly weapon. Why not admit to error, preach a little less about the having of 'exclusive Truth' and a little more about the living of it? Then I could once more support the Church I joined and admired.

Jackson, Missouri

D.J.B."

• The assumption of the writer that "inviolable" in the sentence quoted from the *SIDEGLANCES* in the March issue means

that no law of Christ would ever be transgressed or broken is not correct. The meaning of the entire statement, which can logically be supported by the context, is that the teaching and the moral law of Christ would be preserved unchanged by the Church and not altered to suit the whims and circumstances of the times. The fact that any Catholic or any group of Catholics, or any Pope or number of Popes failed in the observance of Christ's laws in their personal conduct does not prove that the law of Christ was discarded or changed, but rather that the law stood inviolate and inviolable, as it still stands today in the Catholic system of morality, to accuse the offenders of their guilt. Christ Himself knew that His law would be violated in the sense of being transgressed or broken by individuals, because He told us of the rewards and punishments for keeping or not keeping His law. But He also told us that the fundamental Christian law itself as entrusted to His Church would never change and that all hell could do nothing to alter that hard-as-rocks fact.

We urge all, Catholics and non-Catholics alike, to read up on the Inquisitions and similar facts in history, but to read about them in the *Question Box* by Father Conway, or in some reliable book on the subject, because it is good for all to know what was right and wrong about these events.

The editors

### "This Business of Excommunications"

"One of your readers in *Readers Retort* made a dare to have his letter printed. Here is another one. Please read it all, and I dare you to print it all. In reference to the article on *Death in a Bad Marriage*, I do not understand how a man and woman can be living a 'life of sin' just because they weren't married by a Catholic priest.

As I see it, in God's eyes, any man and woman living a clean, pure, decent life, could not be living a 'life of sin.' How could it be, when that is exactly what God wants from us, all the love and goodness we can give? And if being married by a priest or minister determines whether or not they are living a 'life of sin,' I want to know why.

"That article was so shocking it makes God look like a very mean parent disowning his children, referring to this business of excommunications. I definitely do not believe in the Church doing this no matter what a man's sins are. You and some of these fantastic and shocking Church rules are making the Church appear to be a membership club and not a house where God is understanding to his children. I cannot believe that God, knowing Him like I do in my heart, approves of the Church turning people away for so-called sins.

"God is the only judge — so how can you dare to judge any marriage as a 'great sin?' No matter what color or religion a man and a woman are, they are God-made human beings. Thank you very much for reading this. Now print it! Or do you just pick out the easy letters to acknowledge? Canton, Ohio Mrs. J. K. (Catholic)"

• Well, we printed it. But we find it difficult to understand how publishing or not publishing a letter can prove someone right or wrong. In this case publication is the only way we have of trying to help the writer (and others, we hope) since she signed herself merely, "Mrs. J. K. (Catholic)." To answer: the Catholic Church tells only Catholics what conditions they must fulfill to be validly married, and when she makes these laws about marriage, she does so because matrimony is a sacrament, and she has the authority to make laws about the valid reception of the sac-

raments. In all charity and with a desire to help Mrs. J. K. we ask: what would she say if her husband, Mr. J. K., and the woman next door should decide for themselves that the two of them could live together as man and wife, "giving all the love and goodness they can give," because in their personal opinion "they would be living a clean, pure and decent life?" We hope Mrs. J. K. read the article **WHAT IS YOUR CONSCIENCE?** in the April issue.

The editors

"In the January issue you stated that a Catholic who marries before a minister is excommunicated but that a person who marries before a justice of the peace is not thereby excommunicated by the general law of the Church. In both cases they are bound by all the laws of the Church and cannot make a good confession until the marriage has been validated, if possible. Now if the excommunicated party must abide by the laws of the Church, will he benefit spiritually by the acts and works he performs? Also what is the difference in excommunication and general excommunication? We have checked the dictionary which states that there are major and minor excommunications. A major excommunication cuts a person off from social intercourse with the Church. Therefore it would appear even in his abiding by the laws (going to Mass on Sunday, abstaining from meat and so on) he would be wrong. We have been taught that only when a person is in the state of grace can he receive spiritual benefits. Therefore it would appear that in obeying the laws such a one would not benefit.  
New York, N. Y. N.N."

• The little article **DEATH IN A BAD MARRIAGE** was the subject of many letters sent to us. Many of them contained questions about excommunication. That is why we answer now at some length.

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1. Both the Catholic who attempts marriage before a judge and the Catholic who attempts marriage before a minister commit a most grave sin and may not receive the sacraments until the marriage is either validated by a priest or broken up. Both live in sin and public scandal as long as they live as if married after a civil or Protestant ceremony. But because marriage before a Protestant minister is like a public denial of the Catholic faith, the Church imposes a special penalty on those who attempt it — the penalty of excommunication. This excommunication is reserved to the bishop. This means that when one who has been guilty of this sin wants to return to the Church, the priest to whom he goes must get the permission of the bishop to absolve from the excommunication. (Except in case of imminent danger of death, when any priest could absolve if the person is truly penitent.)

2. Anybody living in a bad marriage, whether excommunicated or not, is deprived of the privilege of receiving the sacraments, but remains bound by all the other laws of the Church. One sin, no matter how great, or even living in sin, does not grant to anyone the freedom to multiply sins of disobedience. While it is true that a person not in the state of sanctifying grace cannot gain any merit for heaven by keeping the laws of the Church in regard to Mass on Sunday and fasting and abstaining, still he can, by keeping these laws, receive from God the grace of sorrow and repentance and amendment of life.

3. A general excommunication is one that is imposed by the general law of the Church, such as those imposed on Catholics who marry before a minister. A special excommunication is that which might be imposed by a bishop on an individual or a group of persons for some specially scandalous action.



4. *There is one excommunication that is so severe that it takes away the right of a person even to attend Mass. This is very rarely used. Ordinarily, excommunicated persons are still bound to attend Mass on Sunday, to pray, and they may and should attend missions or novenas. We repeat, it is only through prayer and meditation that they can win the grace of repentance.*

5. *Some persons want to know what they can do for relatives or friends who are in a bad marriage. They should be encouraged to go to a priest and explain their case and their desire to be in good standing in all respects. This is, indeed, not always easy — sometimes very difficult, but the scandal given by a bad marriage must be repaired by difficult actions. The priest will tell the person whether his marriage can be validated, or whether he must give up his unlawful partner. Just a little help and encouragement from a friend or relative has often helped such persons to straighten out their lives.*

The editors

### Husband's Duty

"I agree with Mrs. S. R. K. in the February *Readers Retort* that not enough has been said or done about the husband's duty toward his wife. Too often the woman's duty to submit to man's demands and to keep bearing children regardless of physical or mental hardship is stressed in sermons and writings on marriage. I feel that more could be said about the husband's duties of self-denial and self-control. Most husbands don't feel they should or don't care to practice any self-denial. And I can't see why any husband, if he truly loves his wife, would find it necessary to commit sin, or even be tempted to sin, because of his self-denial. Marriage is supposed to be a 50-50 proposition; but on the above subject it seems more like 30-70, with the wife giving the 70.

Dallas, Texas

Anon."

"The bitter sorrows of young wives which so often are brought to my attention as the teacher of their children and my own loveless marriage which is easy to bear after 'taking up my cross and following Him,' convince me of the following truths: The male sex, in a broad sense, does not know the meaning of love which desires the good for the one loved. American men with work as their compulsive goal and using the antidote of immature forms of recreation (sports usually) are the chief offenders. European men come from an older and richer culture and have developed more fully in their personality and have broader interests. Does the man honor the woman whom he makes a partner of a marriage like mine in which the wife hands over her paycheck or has to live in an atmosphere of warfare and receives in return coldness, indifference and neglect?

N. N.

Anon."

• *The two letters above are a sample of a good number of letters we have been receiving along these lines. We make no judgment on men in general or on women in general. There is no question that there are plenty of selfish men in the world, who have little consideration for their wives in regard to the privileges of marriage. But there are also many selfish women, who too easily see the selfishness in their partners and none in themselves. When they marry, a man and a woman give to each other the right over their bodies for those actions that are necessary for the procreation of children, and that ordinarily brings happiness to the married and helps to preserve them from sin. Both must consider each other's needs, attitudes, moral and physical condition in exercising their rights. But each case is unique; each case is different; each case is complicated by a great many factors. Thus we would never say that all husbands are selfish, or even the greater number,*

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or that all wives, or a great many, are asked to do far more than they bargained for. Give us all the facts in an individual case, both from the angle of the husband and the wife, and only then shall we risk an opinion as to who is the more selfish. Any comment from the men?

The editors

## Our Trespasses Department

"In the January issue of your fine magazine there appeared a short article about the Basilica of St. Joseph in Montreal. The article stated that the basilica was erected largely through the efforts of Brother Joseph. Upon further investigation you will find that the humble and pious Brother Andre' is the one who should get the credit line.

Baltimore, Maryland

C. E. K."

• *We did not need a moment's investigation to be certain of the error referred to. Brother Andre' is the correct name. We are sure that Brother Andre' will forgive us, because we suspect that he liked being named Joseph.*

The editors

## The Heroic Act

"I am a little confused after reading the article by Wm. F. Cummings on *The Heroic Act*. I have been making this act for a number of years as a result of coming across it either in a prayer-book or a leaflet. In the article the point is made that one should consult a confessor before making this act. Here again comes the question of what one priest says and what another one might say — which was covered very nicely in an article in the same issue. Is it necessary to consult one's confessor before making this act?

Bronx, N. Y.

C. M. L."

• *The statement that a confessor should be consulted before making the Heroic Act of Charity was not an expression of obligation, but some strong advice to pre-*

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vent impulsive individuals from making this act hastily and to help all persons to make it prudently. It is always wise to consult a confessor before making a promise of some importance or offering a sacrifice like that contained in the *Heroic Act*.

The editors

## Emergency Baptism

"The two letters in *Readers Retort* in the March issue from mothers who lost babies by involuntary miscarriage expressed my own sentiments, as I have lost three babies in this way. I have learned a great deal since then about what to do in a case like that and I wish that all mothers, besides doctors and nurses, would have the same information. I am enclosing a leaflet that gives the information.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Mrs. F. K."

• *There are several leaflets to be had telling how to give spiritual aid to the dying, besides telling how to baptize in emergency and how to baptize a fetus. This issue carries an article on the subject.*

The editors

•  
"I want to say how much I gain from reading *THE LIGUORIAN*. It takes courage to print the letters of criticism which every publication receives. Anyone can find letters of praise. I also must admit that some of these critical letters make me 'hopping mad', and I would love to come to your defense. Your charitable answers are wonderful and undoubtedly do win some of these hardened souls in the end.

Evansville, Ind.

Dr. R.P.B."

"All the girls in the office — and I — read *THE LIGUORIAN* from cover to cover and discuss your very interesting articles at coffee-breaks.

St. Louis, Mo.

D. H."

# Portrait of Christ . . .

## . . . The Transfiguration (II)

R. J. Miller, C.S.S.R.

SCENE II. The same.

Enter Moses and Elias. They converse with Christ about His approaching death in Jerusalem. The apostles awakened, are dumbfounded. Peter utters some confused words.

**T**HUS we summarized the second scene of the drama of Christ's Transfiguration, when describing it in a former LIGUORIAN article.

The scene is *the same*: a mountain in Palestine. We did not specify what particular mountain it was. Scholars disagree as to its exact identity, although the weight of opinion seems to favor Mt. Thabor.

The apostles too are still *the same*: sound asleep at one of the greatest moments of their lives. And Jesus Christ is *the same*: still transfigured in heavenly glory.

**O**N THE scene, however, there now comes a change. *Enter Moses and Elias*: two new characters in the drama, each coming from

a different distant world. Moses, who had died almost fifteen hundred years before, came from Limbo, the *Limbo of the Fathers*; and Elias, who had passed from this world *without dying* about nine hundred years before Christ (and he has not died to this present day), came from his mysterious Shangri-La abode with the patriarch Henoch in the Garden of Eden.

They *enter* now upon the scene of Christ's Transfiguration. While the apostles sleep, He greets them, and they greet each other; and what a meeting this must have been for these two stalwarts of the Old Testament: Moses, the supreme lawgiver of the Jewish people, and Elias, their greatest prophet.

This is the first part of our Scene II. (The second concerns the reaction of the apostles). Let us pause here upon the first part, and ask a few pertinent questions. For instance, more about where Moses and Elias had come from. What did they really look like? Why Moses and Elias particularly? What were they saying to Christ, and what was their attitude to Him, whilst they were "conversing

with Him about His approaching death in Jerusalem?"

"Points of meditation" might be one name for these questions; but there is another: "Dramatic Content and Possibilities in the Pageant of the Transfiguration." To a lover of Christ, they come to the same thing; but it will help even the meditations if, for a change, we take them in the setting of their dramatic possibilities.

CONSIDER some of the opportunities for a dramatic producer or scenario writer that are contained or involved in this part of the Transfiguration. First of all, the very summoning of Moses and Elias. The two of them in their different worlds, one in Limbo and the other in the Garden of Eden; the actual summons, perhaps by the agency of angels; the other-worldly manner of their journeying to the scene of the Transfiguration. Then the blaze of glory that suffused them when they stood with Christ on Mount Tabor. Then perhaps a series of *flashbacks* (to use the vocabulary of the moving picture drama) showing events in their own lives which gave the reasons for their being called to the Transfiguration; heroic deeds, encounters with kings, the migration of the Jews under Moses from Egypt to Palestine; Elias miraculously calling down fire and then rain from heaven to defeat the priests of the false gods.

Such scenes, and many others in the lives of Moses and Elias, could be turned into powerful drama on the stage or screen by some gifted producer.

Only it is not quite accurate to speak of their being "turned into" drama. *They are drama already.* God Almighty, the supreme *Producer*, planned them as drama from the beginning. In His view, under His providence, all history unfolds as a tremendous drama centering around the great central Hero, Jesus Christ (and of course at His side, the matchless Heroine, Mary Immaculate). Against Him (and against her) the plots of the villain in the story, who is the ancient serpent, are constantly being laid, and as constantly being turned into eventual defeat for the villain and into new conquests for the Hero. And as *supporting cast* in this drama, there is the entire human race; every single human being is ranged on one side or the other, either for the Hero or for the villain. All the struggles, conflicts, victories of history are *sub-plots*, connected in some way with the life and loves and adventures and the victory of Jesus Christ.

IN heaven, one of the joys of the saints will be to see re-enacted, in the infinite, ever-active causality of God (in God's *everlasting now*) the central drama of Christ's life and death (somewhat as Teresa Neumann of Konnersreuth sees them presented in her own mystical experiences). They will also see the *sub-plots*, other struggles and victories from history. Even their own lives will be somehow re-enacted before them; they will watch with suspense, wonder, joy, even admiration (and especially love and gratitude to God) as they see themselves and

their own life history made a spectacle for men and angels in the ages of eternity.

All this, though a digression, is suggested by the presence of Moses and Elias at the Transfiguration, and the reasons for their being there. They must have had a special closeness to Christ in the sub-plots of their own lives.

But let us get down to our pertinent questions about Scene II of the Transfiguration. The first one was: Where had Moses and Elias come from?

The obvious ready answer would be: they came back from the dead. But the strange fact is that such an answer would not be true. Moses came back from the dead, yes, for Moses had died more than a thousand years before: the Holy Bible says:

Moses the servant of the Lord died there,  
in the land of Moab.  
And the Lord buried him in the valley of the land of Moab;  
and no man knows the place of his burial to this present day.

But Elias was different. Elias had not died; he is not dead yet, two thousand years after Christ, and though he is almost three thousand years old himself. The Bible says about him that when his time came, one day as he was walking and talking with his friend and disciple, the prophet Eliseus,

a fiery chariot and fiery horses  
parted them both asunder;

#### MEMORY AID

A missionary catechist was instructing her group of children on the meaning of the Holy Trinity. She described how the Third Person of the Trinity descended on the Apostles at Pentecost, and then, wishing to ascertain how much had been absorbed, asked a few questions.

"Tell me," she said, "by what other name do we call the Holy Spirit? Do you think you could remember a big word like *the paraclete*?"

"Oh, I'll remember that," replied a little girl brightly. "It sounds like parachute, and He did come down on the Apostles, as you just told us."

Quote

and Elias went up by a whirlwind into the sky.

If Elias is not dead, however, where is he now?

We discussed this interesting matter in a recent LIGUORIAN article, and saw that the best opinion is that he and the patriarch Henoch (the one other human being in history who did not die) have their abode in what was originally the home of our first parents, Adam and Eve, namely the Garden of Eden.

FROM two completely different worlds, then, Moses and Elias were summoned to attend the Transfiguration: Moses from Limbo, and Elias from the Garden of Eden. As to the manner of their summoning, according to the Holy Bible Almighty God often made use of the ministry of angels on occasions such as this;

and so, although we have no explicit statement here, we may believe that He did so also on this very special occasion. Thus Moses in Limbo and Elias in Eden suddenly saw before them a heavenly visitor, saluting them in terms of reverence, announcing the will of God that they accompany him on a distant journey of extraordinary distinction; then *spiriting* them off, quite literally, in the twinkling of an eye, to stand beside Christ in majesty on Mount Tabor.

Here we might ask in parenthesis: what about the companions they left behind? What heavenly gossip went on in Limbo after Moses's sudden departure? What speculations as to its purpose, what joyful insights into its true meaning, and its bearing on their own speedy liberation from Limbo? And how did Henoch pass the time in Eden with his one and only companion far away?

Further, when Moses and Elias returned to their respective homes, what eager happy gatherings must have taken place, what questions, what demands for repeated accounts of the Transfiguration! How the holy souls must have delighted in learning details about Christ Himself (Whom they loved with a rapture surpassing all human love), His appearance, His voice, His words, His work on earth, and the progress of His tremendous achievement!

But now back to Moses and Elias on Mount Tabor. What did they look like? That was our next question.

**S**T. LUKE says: "They appeared in majesty." Something of the glory of Christ Himself was theirs; a divine dignity and poise, as of valiant heroes crowned after glorious victories, marked their very bodily posture.

Their bodily posture: yes, but what about their bodies? Were they really their own?

The body of Elias was surely his own; he had never lost it by death. But now, at the Transfiguration, something new had been added. It was suffused with heavenly glory for the few minutes it spent on Tabor, a foretaste of the glory that would belong to it after its death and resurrection at the end of the world; but which it would have to lose in the meantime, when it was returned to the Garden of Eden and the companionship of the patriarch Henoch.

The body of Moses, on the other hand, had been buried by God in the land of Moab many centuries before. When the soul of Moses was summoned from Limbo, where did his body come from? Some of the scholars say his own body rose from the dead; but others believe that God or the angels fashioned a body somehow out of light to serve him for the time.

But why should it have been Moses and Elias particularly to appear with Christ in the Transfiguration?

For one thing, they represented in their persons all of Jewish tradition. "The Law and the Prophets" was the way in which the Jews divided all of the Old Testament. Mos-

es represented the Law; and Elias, (though he never wrote a line that has a place in the Bible), embodied all of the prophets. Thus when Jesus Christ appeared flanked by Moses and Elias, He was giving visible, glorious proof of His assertion that He had come not to destroy but to fulfill the Old Law.

On a more personal basis, Moses and Elias both resembled Christ in this that they were both "forty-day men." Like Our Lord, they had each spent forty days in fasting: Moses when he ascended Mount Sinai to receive from God the Ten Commandments; and Elias, when he was being persecuted by the wicked queen Jezabel.

**A**GAIN, Christ was the Master of life and death. He proved it here by summoning to His side the living Elias and the dead Moses.

The Jews, moreover, accused Our Lord of being a violator of the law and a blasphemer against the true God. The accusation is refuted at the Transfiguration when Moses and Elias, the great Lawgiver and the champion of the true God against idols, put themselves completely on His side.

And finally, the best reason of all: Moses and Elias came to converse with Christ "about His dying that He was going to do in Jerusalem." Their glorious conversation was proof that His death would be not the shame and failure it seemed, but the most exalted triumph the world has ever known. Appearing in majesty after the conflicts, humiliations, persecu-

tions, defeats of their own lives, they testified by their very presence that (as the Bible says) "it was necessary for Christ to suffer and so enter into His glory;" that according to the will of His Father, in the grand plot of the tremendous drama of mankind, the Hero's role was "by His passion and cross to come to the glory of His resurrection."

Then, as to what Moses and Elias were conversing about with Our Lord, St. Luke tells us that it was "His dying that He was going to do in Jerusalem." The phrase is unusual, and suggests more than what the words actually say. The various translators have evidently done some struggling with it, and each renders it a little differently:

His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem.

The death that He was to achieve at Jerusalem.

His death which He was to fulfill in Jerusalem.

His departure from the world which He was to round off in Jerusalem.

And still another might be suggested, as a very literal translation:

His exit that He was to make at Jerusalem.

The Latin word for "death" here is *excessus*, which means either "excess," or "decrease," or "exit." Some saints, St. Alphonsus among them, have called attention to the "excess" meaning of the word, suggesting a reference to the excess of divine con-

descension and mercy which characterized the Passion of Christ.

**B**Y contrast, "His exit that He was to make in Jerusalem" sounds rather dry and matter-of-fact, or suggests the stage and the drama. If we examine the matter closely, however, we may find some justification for this strange translation of a strange phrase. Moses and Elias were not merely making "pious conversation" in conversing with Christ on Mount Thabor. What they were dealing with was indeed solid fact. At the same time, it was indeed to be the crowning scene in a vast drama of tremendous import, with the magnificent "exit" of the Hero the very highest point in the entire drama.

And so, while they spoke of it as a very solid down-to-earth reality, without the slightest pietistic straining or make believe, their attitude to Christ as they spoke of the matter was one of marvelling admiration for the outcome of a drama of the most absorbing interest. Despite their "majesty" on Thabor, and the distinguished careers that lay behind them, they were like small boys conversing with the hero of their dreams on the eve of his greatest contest. Admiration, suspense, wonder breathed in every word they spoke. They gloried in His prowess, His tactics, His overwhelming success against an unscrupulous, confident foe. They asked Him about His plans, His preparations, the enemies and the friends He was to have in the contest. Most of all, they marvelled at the perfection of His "exit;"

God Almighty lowering Himself to be mocked by those who hated Him most, and the Author of Life submitting Himself to death, slain by those He loved and thereby bringing them life everlasting.

Christ, in His turn, was "conversing" with Moses and Elias. Filled with admiration of His own for the plan of His Father, He explained to them how infinitely ingenious, mysterious, gracious was the drama evolved by His Father for the story of mankind; how irresistibly it would unfold; how by His own humiliation and dying, His "exit that He was to make in Jerusalem," He was destined to receive, as His own hard-won and well-deserved right, the position of Saviour, King, and eternal Judge of the human race.

And Moses and Elias, in their own "exit" from the scene of the Transfiguration, might well have been the first to give expression to the sentiment now familiar to millions of lovers of Christ:

We adore Thee, O Christ, and we  
praise Thee;  
because by Thy holy cross Thou hast  
redeemed the world!

+ + +

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A successful marriage resembles a pair of shears, so joined that they cannot be separated; often moving in opposite directions, yet always punishing anyone who comes between them.

*The Catholic*



# POINTED PARAGRAPHS

## **Mother's Day**

Mother's Day, May 13, in the United States generally means a day given over to thanks on the part of sons and daughters to their mothers for all their mothers have done for them in the course of their life.

The services that a good mother renders her children are innumerable. Only God can count them all.

She gives her child life when, according to many learned doctors, it would be so much wiser and, according to the findings of science, so much easier to deny that life in the very act of giving it.

She nurses her child, watches over it, makes countless sacrifices for it even when custom permits her to turn it over to a baby sitter at so much an hour, or to a neighbor, or to a kind relative like a sister or a grandmother.

She sends her child to a Catholic school all the way from the first grade to graduation from the university even though it costs less to patronize the public schools and the state university.

And all the way through life she teaches her child the right road to take. She has studied the map which

is her Catholic religion. She does not leave this important business to chance. She has no desire to see her child lost. So she leads it by her teaching. But especially she leads it by her example.

She does not expect her child to receive the sacraments regularly if she does not receive them regularly herself. And so she goes to Holy Communion every week. She knows that her child will never acquire the spirit of prayer if her child seldom sees its mother at prayer. So she prays without ceasing. She insists on morning and night and meal prayers. She makes the rosary a daily after-supper practice. She prays in temptation, in danger, in joy as well as in sorrow. And her child acquires the same spirit.

A child so raised is invariably a child on the way to heaven. And the one to whom the child owes its thanks, after God, for this great gift of heaven is its mother.

Mother's Day is a day on which the thanks of children to their mothers for all the things their mothers have done for them (if their mothers have been good mothers) can be made articulate. All Catholic children, even such as are grown up,

should remember their mothers on this day by a worthy reception of Holy Communion. And this, whether their mothers be living or dead.

## Corpus Christi

The most important day of celebration during the month of May is the day on which people celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi, May 31, the day after Memorial or Decoration Day.

Corpus Christi means *Body of Christ*. The Body of Christ here refers to Our Lord as He lives in the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist has various names—Holy Communion, the Blessed Sacrament, the Viaticum. Whatever the name, the fact remains that Jesus Christ lives on earth in His Body and in His Blood under the appearance of bread and wine. All Catholics believe this doctrine. The Christian world believed this doctrine from the very beginning of Christianity.

On the feast of Corpus Christi processions are organized, benedictions are given and special services are held in which this most central doctrine of Catholic belief is emphasized. The people are made to understand that insofar as they hold fast to the Eucharist they are assured of their salvation.

Our Lord said, "He who eats My Body and drinks My Blood shall have life everlasting." The man who goes to Holy Communion frequently and fervently and with great faith need no longer fear the rigors of divine justice. He need no longer fear

that he will lose his soul and someday feel the agonies of the damned. Christ Himself told him that the key to the door of heaven is Holy Communion. If he receives Holy Communion with the right sentiments and continues to receive down to the end of his life, he will go to heaven.

Of all the days set aside for special observance during May the feast of Corpus Christi is by far the most important. It clears the road to heaven of brambles and pitfalls and turns that are too sharp to make. It is a day set aside not for mothers (good though such a day is), nor a day set aside for the dead (good also though a day like that is) but a day set aside for God, for the great God of the universe and of the heavens who has chosen to live with men in cramped and crowded tabernacles until the end of the world.

It would be a disgrace if Catholics remembered their mothers and their dead during May and forgot their God. They should finish off the beautiful month of May by attending the Mass and the procession in which Our Lord will be carried around the parish church and even perhaps around the parish grounds. In that way they may be moved to receive Him more often. If they do receive Him more often, they will certainly someday see Him face to face in heaven.

## Memorial Day

May 30 is Memorial Day, or as it is called in some sectors, Decoration Day.

Begun as a day dedicated to the memory of the men who died while serving their country in the armed forces, it gradually came to be a day given over to the memory of all the dead. The veteran dead are still given the priority in public ceremonies held on the day. But the non-veteran dead are not forgotten.

The external observance of Memorial Day consists generally in a trip to the cemetery and in the placing of fresh flowers on the graves of the dead. This is a laudable custom. Flowers are symbolic of life and beauty. Life and beauty are in the possession of those who have gone into eternity in the grace of God, even though their dust is mingling with the soil beneath the tombstones that mark their final resting place on earth.

Memorial Day is an affirmation even on the part of the unbelievers in the immortality of the soul. A man can cry out in a voice that reaches the heavens that he does not believe in heaven or in hell or in any form of life beyond the life of the body.

But when a beloved wife dies or a son is killed in battle or a beautiful young daughter is struck down by a fatal disease, he readjusts his denials. Of a sudden it becomes imperative that there be a life beyond mere earthly life. This cannot be the end of his wife, his son, his daughter! There must be a place where death and corruption have found their match and have been conquered. There must be a place where a re-

union will be effected, where fragrance and beauty and life will reign forevermore.

And so, as though forced by the urgency of his new conviction, this recent unbeliever goes out to the cemetery on Memorial Day and places fragrant and beautiful flowers on the grave of his wife and his son and his daughter. Let his scoffing friends sound out their protests if they will. They cannot destroy a truth that finds its strongest proof in the very heart and soul, indeed in the innermost being of man, namely, that death is but the beginning of life. The flowers on the grave are the silent attestation of that proof. And all America gives its assent on Memorial Day.

## Good Reading For Children

We live in an age literally flooded with newsprint. Papers, magazines, comic books, pictorial reviews are continually around us at all times. If the reading habits of most people are not deep and profound, at least they are as wide and varied as the motley collection of magazines usually to be found in a dentist's waiting room.

Children also dip into and skim over a vast quantity of print and pictures, mostly, perhaps, of the comic book variety, yet making an impact upon their mental attitudes and habits.

The point we would make is that parents have an obligation to provide good, wholesome reading for themselves and their children. Anne L. Luckemeier in the *Newark Advocate*

lists a number of recommended children's periodicals, and we are happy to pass her suggestions along to parents.

For boys between 11 and 14: *The Catholic Boy*, published monthly at Notre Dame, Indiana. This lively magazine contains no preaching, no patronizing, but plenty of accent on sports, adventure, hobbies and great Catholic heroes.

For girls of the same age group: *The Catholic Miss*, published at 25 Groveland Terrace, Minneapolis 5, Minn.

For boys and girls, 10 to 15: *Manna*, published by the Salvatorian Fathers, St. Nazianz, Wis.

Widely used in Catholic schools and catechism classes is the weekly *Catholic Messenger Series*, published by George Pflaum, Inc., Dayton 2, Ohio. There are three editions, for different age groups. From this same publisher comes *Treasure Chest*, an excellent monthly comic book for children of all ages.

*Topix*, published at 260 Summit Ave., St. Paul 2, Minn., presents catechism lessons for children in pictures, and appears each month.

Lastly, we might mention the Catholic Children's Book Club, of 147 E. Fifth St., St. Paul 1, Minn., founded to make available to children the best in current juvenile literature.

## The Cost of Catholic Colleges

Young people sometimes allege this reason for choosing a secular over a Catholic college: it is a matter of finances. It costs so much more,

they say, to attend a Catholic college. We can only scrape together so much money, and we have to shop around for the best bargain in education we can find.

We have always felt a little suspicious of this line of reasoning, without ever having the figures to disprove it. Now, however, the figures are at hand, prepared by an entirely impartial source: The Mutual Insurance Company of New York. The data was compiled in 1954 from information supplied by the colleges and from authoritative reference books. Our immediate source for the information is the lively *Catholic Messenger* of Davenport, Iowa.

The list quotes the comprehensive cost of education per pupil over a four-year period. Six Catholic colleges are listed, and may be taken as representative of the others; they are Boston College, Fordham, Georgetown, Holy Cross, Notre Dame and Marquette. The average cost of a four-year course in these colleges is \$5969. Boston College, Holy Cross and Marquette average \$5600, Georgetown is high with \$7412, and Notre Dame in the middle with \$6880.

Now compare this average cost with that of the middle west state colleges included in the Big Ten. Here the average cost of education per pupil is \$5841. Catholic education in the above Catholic colleges, therefore, averages only about \$25 per year more; and three of them strike an average some \$250 lower than the Big Ten average.

As for the ten leading eastern colleges, including the so-called *Ivy League*, there the four-year cost per pupil climbs to an average of \$7482. Only girls' colleges are higher: the average cost per individual in six top women's colleges is \$8220. Statistics on Catholic women's colleges were not given, but we have no doubt they average considerably less than that.

Catholic education on the college level is of tremendous importance in these days of such widespread mass communication. It is to be hoped that Catholic young people who plan to attend college will make every possible effort to do so in a Catholic institution.

## No Occasion For Pride

During the past year a book appeared in the publishers' lists, the title of which intrigued us to no small degree. The book was by Louis Untermeyer, and was called *Makers of the Modern World*. Among the great men who, in the author's estimation, qualify under this grandiose description are the following:

Baudelaire	Marx
Bergson	Pasteur
Dewey	Proust
Dostoevsky	Pound
Eliot	Rodin
Einstein	Rilke
Kierkegaard	Sartre
Kafka	Stravinsky
Matisse	Gertrude Stein
Melville	

Two reflections occur to us on looking over this representative list.

First, it illustrates how a man can be boxed in by his own pre-possessions and special tastes. Mr. Untermeyer himself is an artist and a writer. How significant, then, that one should find his list of titans heavily weighted on this side. Two thirds of his *makers* are writers and artists, and almost half are poets, dramatists and writers of fiction. Scientists and inventors together occupy less than one-tenth; statesmen, social reformers and revolutionaries the same. The pen indeed is mightier than the sword, but Mr. Untermeyer is inclined to make it literally omnipotent.

The second reflection that occurs to us is this: If these individuals did contribute much to the making of the modern world, is it supposed to be something they can be proud of? The modern world is split into two warring camps. It is a world threatened with atomic destruction. It is a world in which God and God's laws have largely been forgotten and are ignored. Whoever is responsible for the mentality of the modern world will have a lot to answer for to the Creator.

This also is true: Christians and Catholics have not influenced the modern world as much as they should and as much as they could. It is up to them, realizing their full potential, to be the true makers of the world of tomorrow.

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Some people who "know their own minds" have concrete opinions — thoroughly mixed, permanently set.



# Liguoriana



## EXCERPTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF ST. ALPHONSUS

*Selected and Edited by John P. Schaefer, C.S.S.R.*

### EXPLANATION OF THE PRAYERS OF THE MASS (Cont.)

#### 3. The Offertory and the Preface

The Offertory of the Mass embraces everything from the conclusion of the Creed to the Preface. In offering the bread and the wine the priest calls them *the immaculate Host, the Chalice of salvation*. We should not be astonished at this, for all the prayers and all the ceremonies before and after the Consecration have reference to the divine Victim. It is at the moment of consecration that the Victim presents Himself to God and that the sacrifice is offered. But since different acts cannot be explained at the same time, they are explained one after another.

The priest then offers, by anticipation, the bread prepared for the sacrifice saying, "*Accept, O holy Father, this immaculate Host. . .*" And he offers the wine as though it had already been consecrated, saying, "*We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation. . .*" For this wine, later to be changed into the blood of Jesus Christ, becomes our salvation.

St. Augustine says that, since at the Eucharistic table our Saviour offers us His body to eat and His blood to drink, we should also offer to Him our body and blood by giving our-

selves entirely to Him. We should even be ready to sacrifice our life for His glory should that be necessary. These are the beautiful words of the Doctor: "You know what this banquet is and what nourishment is offered you at this table. Since Jesus Christ gives His body and blood entirely, let no one approach without giving himself entirely to the Lord."

A little water is mixed with the wine to represent the mixture or the union that took place in the Incarnation of the Word between the divinity and the humanity. It also serves to represent the intimate union effected in the sacramental union between Jesus Christ and the person who receives — a union which St. Augustine calls, "A mixture of God and of man."

The priest, therefore, in the prayer which he recites while mixing the water with the wine, beseeches God to grant that, as His divine Son became a partaker of our humanity we may be made partakers of His divinity. The Council of Trent, by its ecclesiastical authority, prescribed this mingling of water and of wine in the chalice: "The holy Synod admonish-



es that priests are enjoined by the Church to mix water with the wine that is to be offered in the chalice, as it is believed that the Lord did the same thing."

*We offer unto Thee, O Lord, the Chalice of salvation. . . .* The chalice of salvation is offered to the Lord, so that it may arise in His divine presence as an agreeable odor, for our salvation and for the salvation of the whole world. These prayers recited at the offering of the bread and of the wine are very ancient ones. They were formerly recited by the clergy as well as the faithful when the latter presented their offerings to the priest. The prayers recited at present by the priest at the offering of the bread and of the wine have reference to the offerings which the faithful formerly made, not at the altar, but at the entrance of the choir.

*In a spirit of humility, and with a contrite heart, let us be received by Thee, O Lord. . . .* The priest presents himself before Our Lord with a humble and contrite heart and begs Him to bless the great sacrifice that is about to be offered: *Come, O Sanctifier. . . .*

Then he goes to wash his hands, out of respect for this divine sacrifice, reciting at the same time the psalm, *I will wash my hands among the innocent.*

*Receive, O holy Trinity. . . .* By this prayer the priest offers to God Jesus Christ as a Victim already immolated by His death on the cross. Heretics calumniate us when they maintain that we offer to God two

different sacrifices, namely, the sacrifice of the cross and that of the altar. There are not two sacrifices, for the sacrifice of the altar is a memorial of the sacrifice of the cross. It is really the same sacrifice as that of the cross, Jesus Christ being there the principal Offerer and the Victim Who is offered.

*Brethren, pray. . . .* By these words the priest exhorts the people to petition the Lord to receive this sacrifice for the glory of His name and for the good of the faithful. The server then answers in the name of the people by praying to God to accept this sacrifice: *"May the Lord receive this sacrifice from thy hands. . . ."*

Then follows the Secret, a prayer which refers to the offerings made by the people, namely, of the bread and wine that are to be changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Church asks the Lord to bless them and to render them profitable, not only to those who present them, but to all the faithful. An example of this may be seen in the Secret of the fifth Sunday after Pentecost: *"Mercifully receive, O Lord, these offerings of Thy servants; that what each hath offered for the honor of Thy name, may avail for the salvation of all."* The Offertory of the Mass is concluded with this Secret prayer.

Before passing to the Canon of the Mass the priest reads the Preface. In this he exhorts the faithful to raise their heart to God: *"Lift up your hearts."* The people answer that they have already done so: *"We have lift-*



ed them to the Lord". And the priest continues by inviting them to unite with him in thanking the Lord: "Let us give thanks to Our Lord God". He then says that it is just and salutary to render thanks through Jesus Christ. For Christ alone can worthily give thanks for eternal salvation and for so many benefits granted to men and to the angels for all the gifts that they have received.

The priest entreates the Lord to accept our prayers united with those of the angels, who celebrate His glory by repeating without ceasing the Cantic, *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts!* And he concludes by repeating the words used by the Jewish people in their acclamations at the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem: *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!*

## THE ORIENTAL TOUCH

The following beautiful prayer was used by John C. Wu, the Chinese convert, in invoking the aid of the Blessed Mother when he was translating the Gospels into Mandarin:

"Holy Mother, Spouse of the Holy Ghost, help me to weave the Chinese tunic for your Son, the Divine Word. Make it a seamless robe, beautiful and wearable. Give it an oriental touch; perfume it with frankincense, preserve it with musk, line it with gold, but at the same time make it as light and as comfortable for Him to wear as possible. Share with me some of those gifts which you received from the Magi, plus your blessing. In one word, Mother, do the work for me, for no one knows your Son's measure and taste better than you; I will cooperate as your apprentice tailor."

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## Dwindling Audience

The ocean-liner was sailing through heavy seas on its first night out. The twelve privileged passengers at the Captain's table wore very uncertain looks but the Captain decided to go ahead with his usual speech of welcome.

"I hope," he began, "that you twelve will have a good crossing. . . . It is a real pleasure to see on your eleven bright faces the friendliness you ten feel at this gathering of nine strangers to partake of your eight dinners. After dinner if you four care for a game of bridge, I shall be happy to entertain both of you in my cabin. Or, perhaps, sir, you will join me at the bar? All right, waiter, clear the table. I don't intend to eat alone."

*The Far East*

## Give for a Blessing

Every man who comes near you is going to ask something of you; the poor man, for money; the downcast, for comfort; the fighter, for moral support. Give! Give! You CAN give! In as many hours as the day has, give, although it be only a smile, a hand-shake, or a heartening word. In as many hours as the day has, resemble Him Who is nothing else but perpetual giving, perpetual diffusion, perpetual largesse.

*Amado Nervo*

## BOOK LOVERS DEPARTMENT



*Conducted by Thomas Tobin, C.S.S.R.*

### **Marjorie Morningstar**

Herman Wouk

It is only natural that the readers of *The Caine Mutiny* would be waiting for the next novel by Herman Wouk. *Marjorie Morningstar* is Wouk's offering to his public. As usual, critical opinion is divided about the merits of a book that follows the best seller. Some acclaim it as a worthy successor to *The Caine Mutiny*; others decry it as a dull, tedious and lengthy (565 pages) story that never seems to catch fire.

The story is that of the life and loves of *Marjorie Morningstar* from her seventeenth year until she is the contented mother of a family. The love element ranges from an adolescent love for George, through an infatuation that culminates in an affair with Noel Airman, until it reaches fulfillment in a happy marriage. When *Marjorie* was led on by a degree of success in amateur dramatics to plan for a life as an actress, the name with which she was born, *Morgenstern*, has to be translated into its English equivalent, *Morningstar*.

Several characters stand out in the pages of the long novel. Noel Airman, *Marjorie's* lover, is pictured as a pleasure-seeking, intellectual snob who is long on the talk and short on the production of any worthwhile dramatic piece. *Marjorie* idealizes Noel so much that it takes her a long time to know his literary ability as well as his personal value. *Marsha Zalenko* is the loud-mouthed, amoral character who strides in and out of *Marjorie's* life. The Jewish characters are especially well drawn. *Mrs. Morgenstern* is a shrewd, uneducated mother whose practical insight senses a situation much better than her college educated daughter and whose advice leads her daughter to do just the opposite, much to her regret later on. The uncle, the typical Jewish comic figure, is the well meaning person, at times humorous at times pathetic, whose buffoonery cements the family together.

A critical appraisal of Marjorie Morningstar? From the literary viewpoint I believe that it is well done. The plot advances well though not too rapidly. But the plot is subordinated to the characters who, in general, are skillfully portrayed. Adversely, some of the speeches of the persons remind one of the endless orations of the Dostoevsky figures. Of all the persons in the book the heroine remains of a shadowy nature without too definite delineation. From a moral point of view Wouk does bring sin into the theme of the novel, but it is always treated as sin and there is none of the crude realism that spoils so many contemporary novels. Because of some of the topics treated the book is not for the adolescent. For the mature reader this latest book by Wouk can be a very enjoyable experience.

(Doubleday, \$4.95.)



### **The Pastor's Cat**

Edward Vincent Dailey

Depression days in Chicago might well be the subtitle of these essays from the pen of Monsignor Edward Dailey who served as assistant pastor at the Cathedral during the thirties. Like the cat that strayed into his rectory there are heart warming sketches of human strays who came across the path of the young priest. In the pages of the book we meet Dempster MacMurphy, the man who developed the devotion to St. Dismas, the good thief, as well as Barney Kessell (Hello, Senator) the restaurant man who supported Maryhouse for destitute women during the dark days of the depression. The author gives us a miscellany of people whose lives he has recaptured in the sketches of the book. Delightful and inspirational reading.

(Bruce, \$2.75.)



### **The Hills Were Liars**

Riley Hughes

In times of great national and international stress two types of novels will appear, the optimistic novel that shows a better world and the pessimistic work that depicts the end of the present world. **The Hills Were Liars** is the story of the end of our civilization with all the great cities of the world destroyed and only a handful of people living in caves and in a very primitive fashion. Among the survivors of the wars of destruction are the members of the Company of the Fish with Pope Paschal at their head and Kevin as the civil head of the small group. The story is well told and interesting to those who like the apocalyptic type of novel.

(Bruce, \$3.25.)

**Brother Nicholas****George Lamb**

Surely one of the most unconventional of the saints is Brother Nicholas of Flue, Switzerland. A farmer, a respected member of the council, a husband and father of ten children he left his home and family with their consent to become a hermit in the neighborhood of his old home. To add to the strangeness of the picture he did not eat or drink for twenty years and further was known as the Savior of Switzerland even though he never left his solitary hermitage! St. Nicholas is one of the saints whom God raises up for specific purposes at certain times in our history, but he is one to be imitated in the essential saintliness of his life but not in the circumstances. The English author, George Lamb, has presented a clear and sympathetic portrait of this unusual saint.

(Sheed and Ward, \$2.50.)

**Why Hast Thou Come?****John Carr, C.S.S.R.**

Whenever St. Bernard felt the need of urging himself onward in the quest of perfection he would ask himself this question: **Why Hast Thou Come?** This question has been used as the title of a series of reflections for religious, especially those who are called to the active apostolate. Considerations on the truths of the spiritual exercises and the principal virtues help to remind the active religious of the paramount importance of his own sanctification. Written by an experienced missionary and capable author, **Why Hast Thou Come?** admirably serves its purpose of giving spiritual advice to the religious engaged in an intense life of zeal for souls.

(Clonmone and Reynolds, 10/6)

**On the Truth of the Catholic Faith St. Thomas Aquinas  
Book II: Creation**

Dr. James F. Anderson, professor of philosophy at Marquette University, continues his translation of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, the second best known work of St. Thomas. It is concerned with proving the truth of the Faith against the arguments of the heretics. The first book treated of the existence and perfections of God; the second book deals with creation as the external work of God. The treatise is concerned with the creation of things, the distinction of things from one another and the nature of created beings. Excellent translation of an important source book for students of philosophy and theology.

(Hanover House, \$2.95. Hard Cover)

(Image Books, 95c. Paper Cover)

## **The Mystical Theology of St. Bernard**

Etienne Gilson

In 1933 the University College of Wales asked the internationally known scholastic scholar, Etienne Gilson, to deliver a series of lectures on some topic of his own choosing on medieval philosophy or theology. This request led him to give the lectures with the purpose of proving that St. Bernard had a definite theology of the spiritual life and not merely a series of practical precepts and helpful counsels. In this very scholarly book Gilson shows the metaphysics of love as the characteristic point as well as the fountain of all the saint's doctrine on the spiritual life. A very learned and technical book that will appeal chiefly to scholars.

(Sheed and Ward, \$3.50.)



## **Helps and Hindrances to Perfection**

Thomas J. Higgins, S.J.

Father Thomas J. Higgins follows up his previous work, **Perfection is For You**, with considerations of the various aids and obstacles in the pursuit of perfection. Such important topics as Faith, Time, Patience, Friendship, Pleasure, and Work are among the practical subjects in this book. The chapters give a thorough discussion to each topic, a discussion that draws heavily upon the teaching of the Fathers of the Church. A good book for the lay person as well as the religious.

(Bruce Publishing Co., \$4.50.)



## **No Time For Sergeants**

Mac Hyman

This is one of the funniest books that I have ever read on army life or on any other subject. The hero is a hill-billy from Georgia who is inducted into the Air Force, much to his sorrow. Will Stockdale has a penchant for getting into one ridiculous situation after another. One of the most humorous incidents is that of the interview with the psychiatrist who asks many of the usual questions of Will. When asked why he hates his mother Will passes the question back to the startled man and asks him if he hates his mother. The inspection of quarters by the General is another scene that brings howls of laughter to the reader. The night maneuver that shifted Will and his buddy, Ben, to the army is a classic piece of humor. The butt of the simplicity of Will is always the sergeant, hence the title **No Time for Sergeants**. A very diverting book that will completely relax the reader for a few hours.

(Random House, \$2.95.)

# LUCID INTERVALS

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A man got off a train, green in the face. A friend who met him asked him what was wrong.

"Train sickness," said the traveler. "I'm always deathly sick when I ride backwards on a train."

"Why didn't you ask the man sitting opposite you to change with you?" asked the friend.

"I thought of that," replied the traveler, "but there wasn't anybody there."

•

Jack: "I've made up my mind to stay home this evening and relax."

Jill: "Too late. I've made up my face to go out."

•

Two old ladies arrived at the baseball park just as a batter hit a home run. They sat watching the game in silence until — several innings later — the same batter came up to the plate and hit another home run.

One of the ladies tapped the other on the shoulder and said:

"Let's go. This is where we came in."

•

A local store was giving away balloons and the place was crowded with children, all anxious to receive one of the playthings. As one small boy came up to the clerk, he asked politely if he might have two balloons.

"I'm sorry," was the reply, "but we only give one balloon to each boy. Have you a brother at home?"

The youngster was truthful, but he did want another balloon.

"No," he replied, "but my sister has."

•

Two old coon hunters were swapping tall stories about their dogs.

"Why," said one of them, "I had a yellow hound once and every time just before I went hunting I'd whittle out a board in the shape of a coon-hide stretcher, just to let him know the size coon I wanted. Then I'd set it outside where he could see and smell it. Well, sir, one day my wife set the ironing board outside for awhile, and the critter sized it up and he ain't come home yet!"

•

The man was a new member of the club but not a good golfer. He sliced his first shot from the tee. His second shot found him still farther from the green, and after his third shot he was lost, far from the fairway. When he and his caddy finally found the ball, he said:

"What direction is the green from here?"

"Due west, sir," replied the caddy.

"What do you think we ought to do now?" asked the man ruefully.

"Well," replied the caddy, "if we jump through the hedge here, we can catch a bus."

•

In a small Western town, an old gentleman was walking by a saloon when, without warning, a young cowhand dashed out, took a flying leap from the sidewalk and landed sitting upright in the gutter. The man hurried over to the cowboy and asked:

"Are you hurt?"

"No," was the angry reply, "but I'd sure like to meet the so-and-so who moved my horse."

## BEST SELLERS

A Moral Evaluation of Current Books, Published at the University of Scranton, Pa.

### I. Suitable for general reading:

Meaning of Monastic Life—*Bouyer*  
 The New Dimensions of Peace—  
*Bowles*  
 Treasury of Christmas Plays—*Brings*  
 The Band Will Not Play Dixie—  
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